

THE WAY TO BE HAPPY
COMMON-SENSE PSYCHOLOGY

by

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FOR MY WIFE

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PREFACE

LONG AGO IN COLLEGE the professor of philosophy said: "Mr Gould, you never will be a philosopher; you cannot seem to forget the common-sense viewpoint" The good man meant to reproach me, but, in fact, supplied me with a yardstick by which I have tried to measure all that I have said or written since then. Although based on personal experience and conviction, this book does not claim originality of thought or reserach: it is an attempt to state in common-sense terms how the principles of Freudian psychology may help us free ourselves from fears and false impressions that have made us needlessly unhappy. I hope they will do this as effectively for you as they have for me and the people of whom I have written.

I shall thank my analysts without identifying them, lest I seem to make them responsible for views which they might not agree with—after all, they wanted me to reach my own conclusions, not adopt theirs But I will express direct appreciation to the editors who helped me unlearn most of what I was taught about "English composition". Messrs Carl Easton Williams, Frank McLearn, Fred Menagh, Sylvan Byck, and R. R. Endicott I am also grateful for permission to reprint material from the pages of *The Woman*, *Parents' Magazine*, *She*, and especially *The Family Circle*, in which what I regard as my best work in extended form has appeared

L. G

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PART ONE

GETTING ON WITH YOURSELF

CHAPTER I

SCIENCE SHOWS THE WAY

ARE YOU HAPPY?

I am not talking of the raptures most of us feel at a few never-to-be-forgotten moments, nor imagining that you—or anyone—have had a life with no dark hours. I am only asking whether your life as a whole, day after day, brings you a sense of satisfaction that is more than mere contentment or bowing to the inevitable. Do you enjoy living right now, or do you endure the present on the strength of some hoped-for future “when you grow up,” “when you get well,” “after you are married,” “when your ship comes in”—or, perhaps, when the time comes to go to a better world than this one?

If I were a casual acquaintance—or a Gallup pollster—you would probably say you are at least reasonably happy right now. For one thing, admitting that you are unhappy might imply that you were “unsuccessful” either in your work or in your marriage, and that would be an admission you might think humiliating. Besides, if it got around, it might hurt your reputation or the feelings of someone whom you are fond of. But I am not asking you to tell me, only that you “stop and think about it.” And although I do not know you, I predict that if you are not a lot wiser and more fortunate than most of us your answer will be, “No.”

It's true that my experience of human beings might be called one-sided. Throughout my adult life I have been in one profession or another to whose members people take their troubles rather than their joys and satisfactions. Except for my friends—and frequently these have been no exception—nearly everyone whom I have come to know has been unhappy about one thing or another. Boys and girls have been unhappy at their parents'

lack of understanding or at their own inability to get the better of "temptation"; husbands have had wives—as wives had husbands—who were cold or inconsiderate or cruel; business-men have had the wrong jobs, and housewives have felt crushed by domestic duties; parents have been disappointed in their children or frightened by their "unruliness," and so on, until sometimes I felt I should be crushed by the sheer weight of other people's sorrows even if I had none of my own. Are the few hundreds of men and women I have met and the thousands who have written to me very different from the mass of mankind? I do not believe so.

You may not Know You're Unhappy

There are a lot of people who think themselves happy—if they think at all—because they have never realized that life can bring more than surface satisfactions. They are like the gangster's mistress in the play, *Born Yesterday*, whose answer to the question as to whether she is happy is, "I got two mink coats!" Or the business-man who is too much absorbed in making money to consider whether he is happy or not. Or the "loyal" wife or husband to whom a confession of unhappiness would be a kind of treason. I suppose there are millions of us who are fundamentally unhappy and yet do not recognize the fact until it is somehow brought to our attention.

Miss K., for instance, came to me for "lessons in psychology." She was a successful career woman, still young and attractive, who felt all she needed was a bit of help toward understanding other people. She admitted that she had a hasty temper, was subject to periodic migraine headaches, and probably drank more than she ought to, but on the whole she was "doing all right." After a few "lessons" she began to wonder if she should not go a little deeper, and decided to attempt psychoanalysis. Before long, although her headaches stopped and her desire for alcohol diminished, she began to realize that both these and a lot of other things she "hadn't stopped to think about" meant really that she was unhappy and hated the kind of life she had been leading. She decided that there were more important things than business successes, stopped driving herself so mercilessly, and began enjoying life as she had never known she had it in her to do.

Maybe you will think Miss K was foolish. Many people regard happiness as sentimental nonsense or feel that the quest of it is selfish. Yet the fact is, an unhappy person seldom can achieve his fullest usefulness to other people or get lasting satisfaction from his own achievements. Nothing stunts a child's development, for instance, more than having parents who are too concerned with "duty" to take time out to enjoy life with him.

Bessie Y. had a rare musical talent and at fourteen had already given a recital which won high praise from the critics. But Judge Y., her father, had no interest in his children except to make them obedient and respectful, while his wife—who scarcely dared to express an opinion in his presence—tried to gain a second-hand sense of importance through being "ambitious for her children." Bessie was allowed no leisure or amusements, but spent all the time she could spare from her schoolwork in continuous practising. She hated her music because it deprived her of the good times other girls had, married at eighteen a man she did not particularly care for mainly to get away from home, and besides developing a serious neurosis, has long since stopped playing altogether. Bessie's parents were good, conscientious people who believed their attitude toward their children was "unselfish," but because they neither achieved happiness nor taught their children how to find it, they failed miserably at what they themselves would have admitted was the biggest job of their lives.

Only Happy People are Altruistic

For that matter, it is only happy people who are capable of genuine unselfishness or altruism. An unhappy person always gets a secret, if unconscious, satisfaction out of making others miserable, while the man or woman who enjoys life finds that pleasure is enhanced by being shared with others. Whether you have heard a good joke or are admiring a sunset, your natural impulse, if you are a happy person, will be to look for somebody to whom you can tell the joke or who will come and enjoy the sunset with you. Indeed, as an eminent psychiatrist has put it: "The Ego can only give out in altruistic, mature fashion if it has a surplus. It can only spill over and give to others if it has itself received sufficient gratification." Therefore, if you are not

happy, your wish to become so—which at heart all men share—is more than a harmless weakness: it points to the one way in which you can attain your fullest possibilities, either of usefulness or of achievement

Like love, happiness does not mean exactly the same thing to any two people, and no definition of it will please everybody. There are people, for example, to whom happiness not only means more than pleasure, but something which they regard as morally or æsthetically “higher.” But since to me pleasure can mean anything from the taste of a pre-war beefsteak to one’s first glimpse of the Parthenon, I feel that the only true distinction is that happiness is lasting, while pleasure is momentary. To be happy means to enjoy a succession of experiences, each of which is pleasurable, with comparatively few sensations of pain or of prolonged tension. It is such a life which the majority of people always have hoped to achieve, though pathetically few have actually done so. And the reason for this is still to me the most vital of all human problems.

“Happiness is in You”

One point upon which most authorities have almost monotonously agreed is that the source of happiness is *in you*. “The city of happiness is in the state of mind”—as the wall mottoes used to put it. But just how you can create this state of mind if you don’t have it, the wise men have failed to tell us; and this is because until comparatively lately the mind itself has been largely undiscovered territory. The small part of the mind whose function is to help us adapt ourselves to our physical environment has worked with triumphant success. We not only can survive with reasonable comfort in the uttermost extremes of climate, but we can raise food in the desert and move relatively safely, not only on the earth’s surface, but over and underneath the sea and in the sky above us. Compared with the inability of even the wisest of animals to live except under strictly limited conditions, our powers of “adaptation for survival” are unique in nature.

But when man attempts to make a similar adjustment to his fellow humans—or, still more, to himself—what a different story! From world wars to individual neuroses, the record is

one of few successes and innumerable tragic failures. And while almost every method you can think of has been advocated or attempted in the long parade of religions and philosophies, none of these has ever been able to make most men happy, and no one has really known why. Only within the lifetime of the present older generation has *science* at last discovered why the mind, which has learned to move mountains and alter the course of rivers, has not solved the problem of how to get on with ourselves and one another.

The Scientific Way

Like so many others, this discovery, when it did come, occurred in the search for something else. It was in the course of research into the cause and cure of mental illness that Sigmund Freud and his followers found *the scientific way to happiness* which men have been seeking through the ages. I know that is a tremendous statement and may seem a rash one—this book is my effort to explain and justify it.

To repeat, the reason why we did not find the way to happiness which we have always felt lay in our minds is that our minds themselves were until lately unknown territory. What Freud found and demonstrated was that, as he put it, only one-tenth of the mind is where it can be seen by ordinary methods, while the rest, like the bulk of a floating iceberg, lies hidden beneath the waters. And in this dark area of the mind which he called the "Unconscious" lies the reasons for our failure to develop the capacities for adaptation to ourselves and others—and therefore for happiness—which we were born with.

Before I have finished I shall tell you many stories illustrating how this works out, but that of Blanche F. may well begin the series. In her middle thirties, Blanche is still as attractive as she was at twenty and still bowls men over as effectively as ever. But she knows enough to realize that this cannot go on indefinitely and, while she is able to earn a good living, she's beginning to be lonely and to realize it's too bad that she is not married. She has talked of marriage for years, and has been engaged so often she has lost count, but something invariably makes her draw back and decide at the last moment that this is not "the right man for her." The fact is, Blanche had a father

who was a chronic philanderer and eventually deserted her and her mother while she was still a schoolgirl. And while she is sensible enough to know that all men are not like her father, the *unconscious* distrust and desire to get even she developed out of her experience with him have been too strong to allow her to trust any other man, or overcome her urge to treat each of her suitors as she herself was once treated. Yet Blanche had had no idea of this until a psychoanalyst helped her to see it. She was as much puzzled over why she was so restless and unhappy underneath her round of "good times," as thousands of other people whom their friends call lucky but who in fact are no happier than she was.

Dynamic Psychology

As everyone knows by this time, Freud discovered the "Unconscious" through the technique of psychoanalysis, of which I shall say a lot more later. His studies made possible a new kind of psychology, known as "dynamic" because it deals with the *forces* that produce our feelings and behaviour rather than the behaviour alone. Dynamic psychology, for instance, asks not what percentage of men are unfaithful to their wives, but *why* they are unfaithful; or, more accurately—since it always deals primarily with individual cases—what drives John Smith to "cheat" and keeps Tom Jones a devoted husband.

But before we talk too much of forces operating in the mind we must try to define what the mind is. We can do this as well as we need to without going into any of the age-long philosophical arguments about it. The mind from the modern psychological or psychiatric standpoint is a still somewhat mysterious function of *the entire organism* that makes up a human being. It is not located anywhere specifically, but serves the whole person for a single purpose—to help him adapt himself to his environment so as to find satisfaction for his needs and desires. And since pleasure is the feeling we experience when we find such satisfaction, and happiness is continued pleasure, we may say that the mind is that part of us whose job is to show us how we can be happy, and that if we are unhappy, it is because our minds are not working as they ought to.

Because we habitually call an organ which does not work "sick," it has become the common practice to speak of "sick minds" or "mental illness," and I shall use these phrases myself for convenience. Indeed, anyone whose mind does not work as it ought to—a neurotic, for example—is unquestionably a sick person, often even physically. But it would be nearer the exact truth to call such a mind undeveloped, stunted, or warped, since the main fact dynamic psychology has uncovered is that people's minds fail to function because their development has been arrested by some force originally outside of themselves, and that this force is primarily *fear*. To be more specific, this means that if you are unhappy, it is mainly because you have never entirely grown up, and that if you have not grown up, it is because you were afraid to.

"Insight"

Happiness, in other words, does not depend on faith, or moral virtue, still less on good fortune, though all of these may contribute to it. Happiness is gained through *understanding*, or what the psychiatrist calls "insight." You get what you want because you *see how* to obtain it. But the seeing must go farther than mere intellectualizing. It must penetrate to your emotions, which are the real motive force of your existence, not just stop at your intelligence, which is as often used to shield you from the truth as to reveal it to you. If you visit a jail, the first prisoner you talk to might give you more unanswerable arguments to prove that "crime does not pay" than you have ever thought of, and might even think that he believed them, but whether he really *sees* that they are true will remain unproved until he gets out and either "goes straight"—or doesn't. All you have to do to make an alcoholic give up drinking is to get him to *see* that the release he gets from liquor is not worth what it costs him; intellectually he already *knows* this much better than you do, but if he still goes on drinking, it is because *his* experience has not made him realize it emotionally.

But of course to see things you must first look at them, and this takes both opportunity and—often—courage. You must "face reality" before you can adjust your ways of trying to get satisfaction to it. In fact, you must face two aspects of it: the reality *outside* you (or the truth about the world in which you

have to seek your satisfactions), and the reality of *yourself* (what your actual feelings and desires are). You were born with the ability to do this if your fears do not prevent it—indeed, that is what you have a mind for.

“Reality” has a formidable sound, and I can still recall the hours I spent (or wasted) puzzling over the philosophers’ attempts to define it. But the sense in which the word is used in this book is quite simple. Reality is *the way things are*, as distinct from the way you think they are, or want them to be.

You may think the girl you are in love with feels one way about you, and wish that she felt another, and neither of these may be “reality.” But there is a way she *really* feels about you, even though she herself may not know what it is, and the nearer you can come to guessing or divining this the better you will know how to act toward her. At the same time, what you think *your* feelings for *her* are may not be “real,” either—though you do have feelings and they are what they are, no matter how little you may understand them. And here, too, the closer you can come to facing reality, the better the chance that your relationship with your beloved will bring you the happiness you hope for.

There are two main obstacles to seeing reality and adjusting ourselves to it. One is ignorance, which basically means not having had a chance to find out how to do what must be done to get what you want. The reason it took us so long to be able to fly was mainly, if not wholly, ignorance of the laws of aerodynamics, and once we discovered the reality of these laws and developed a machine that was adjusted to them, the “air age” began. But while ignorance still prevents our doing many things in which we might find pleasure and escaping many that cause pain, that’s something which time can be trusted to take care of. There are no discoverable limits to humanity’s capacity for learning, even though the only finally effective method—trial-and-error—may be slow and, to the individual, sometimes costly.

A much larger obstacle to happiness than ignorance is *false impressions*—above all those which we get in childhood. For it is at birth, if not even before that, that the human mind is most impressionable, and the notions we acquire as babies and small children both go deeper and last longer than any that we

develop later. It is when these first impressions are mistaken—as some of them more or less inevitably are—that the obstacles are set up which block our emotional development or “slant” it in the wrong direction. It isn’t our fault this happens, but unfair as it may sound, that does not alter the effect upon us or protect us from the consequences of being unable to see things more clearly. Theoretically, as a person matures, he revises his impressions on the basis of wider experience and of his own greater strength and knowledge. He profits by his mistakes and makes sure not to repeat them. But in practice few of us can do this in all—or most—cases.

The Man Who had to be Sick

If you asked my friend Tom W. why he is not happy he would be amazed at such a “stupid” question. How could you expect him to be happy when he is ill most of the time? Yet the truth is, Tom’s unhappiness and illness are both results of an uncorrected “false impression.” His mother died when he was a baby and his father’s second wife, who brought him up, disliked him cordially and did not hesitate to show it. (He reminded her of the unpleasant fact that her husband had been married before.) Having no way to learn better, Tom developed the idea that he must be the sort of person no one ever could love, and he has built his life around that notion.

Since no one can live unless he can get love from somewhere, Tom has had to fall back upon himself in a subtle and unconscious form of self-love. He would be ashamed to be openly selfish or conceited—which “loving yourself” means to most people—but he has discovered that no one will blame him for being *absorbed in himself* and his troubles as long as he is ill. So although he doesn’t realize it, Tom *has* to be sick, and no sooner has he been cured of one real or imaginary illness than he starts developing a new set of symptoms. His pattern of living is a typical “neurotic compromise,” made necessary by his childish false impression of the sort of person he is. And this is false nowadays, however true it may have been when he was little, because there is no reason whatever why Tom as an adult could not win love from another person just as easily as anyone else. He has never learned to do so because he has never

outgrown the result of his first failures, and emotionally is still five years old.

What has made Tom's false impression keep him from maturing is, of course, the element of *fear* it left in his mind. He has never dared to try to find out whether he might not win love because he has been so terribly afraid of a repetition of the pain he suffered when the people to whom he first looked for love refused him. Early students of psychoanalysis believed that such fears were implanted by a single shock or "trauma," and that a mentally blocked person could be freed to go on growing up if you could find out what the trauma was in his case and make him see how he had exaggerated its importance. But to-day we know that with a few exceptions (the death of a mother, for example) the effect of any one shock on a child's mind depends on his general emotional bias and especially the way he felt and feels about his parents.

Are "Shocks" so Important?

John F. had a fear of enclosed places which made it impossible for him to ride in elevators, and extremely hard even to take the subway. He believed the trouble started with a time when as a punishment his mother locked him in the closet, forgot she had done so, and went out to do her morning's shopping, to come home and find him nearly half dead of suffocation. But while this would certainly have had a bad effect on any child, what made it so severe and lasting in John's case was that he had never felt sure that his mother loved him, so that her "forgetting" him became the focal point around which all his feelings of neglect and helplessness came to be centred. Had he felt really secure in her affection he would have been able to forget her "absent-mindedness" comparatively quickly. And because most obstacles to mental growth are based on whole relationships, not isolated incidents, I speak of "impressions" rather than of "traumas."

But the fact that we are so impressionable in the early years of our lives is not the only reason why our false impressions cannot be corrected and the fears they have left with us outgrown. A still bigger reason is that we have come to be unconscious of them, and so cannot re-examine them or test them by the wider

vision of reality which adult experience brings us. If you suffer physical pain beyond your particular limit of endurance, a reaction automatically takes place which makes it impossible for you to feel the pain any longer—you faint or go into coma. But what no one knew until Freud's time was that the same thing happens in the case of feelings or emotions which become too painful to be endured. An equally automatic process called "repression" blots them out of your awareness and makes you as totally unconscious of them as though they had never entered your mind. John F. had repressed his feeling of resentment toward his mother because of an overwhelming childish fear that if she knew he felt that way about her, she might decide to abandon him entirely. He "displaced" his fear on to the closet, and to any other place that could remind him of it, but had quite "forgotten" where it really came from.

As we shall see later, the most painful of all feelings are those of guilt and shame, so that it is these that we are likely to repress even in situations in which we are clearly conscious of other emotions which distress us but are not beyond endurance. Take, for instance, the case of the soldier who develops a battle neurosis after seeing his best friend killed beside him. The man is or may be fully conscious of his grief at the loss, and even of his fear at knowing that it might have been himself who stopped the bullet. But the chances are that he is wholly and sincerely unaware of how glad he is that even his best friend rather than himself was the victim, or of a superstitious sense that feeling that way makes him psychologically an accomplice in his friend's death.

The Unconscious Mind

What psychoanalysis has revealed to an astonished—and frequently terrified and angry—world is that the mind of every man and woman contains a mass of emotions, memories, and urges which have been "repressed" in this way; and what is more that, once repressed, nothing can be brought back into consciousness by an effort of will or by trying to be "honest with yourself." Only release *through some outside agency* from the fear which brought on the repression can bring the repressed material into the open again. The part of the mind which is made up of repressed feelings, wishes, memories, hopes, *et*

cetera, has come to be spoken of as the Unconscious Mind, or simply The Unconscious—and this, as I said before, is both larger and more potent in controlling our behaviour than the conscious mind of whose existence we are aware. -

If you're not familiar with this idea, I dare say it will sound unconvincing, and indeed the only way one can know definitely what it means to have had repressed feelings is through the experience of having them brought back to consciousness. But at any rate this is the sense in which I use the words "repression" and "unconscious," so don't fall into the common error of supposing that when you decide you'd rather keep your job than gratify your impulse to tell the boss to go jump in the lake, you have "repressed" your fit of temper. You *suppressed* it—though perhaps less perfectly than you imagine—but it was not repressed because *you were conscious of it*. If you have a repressed feeling toward your employer, it is one you could not bring yourself to admit, such as being in love with him, or having a sneaking admiration for his nerve in pushing other people around as you have always wanted to but never quite dared.

Because everyone has an unconscious mind full of repressed feelings and desires, every human being suffers to some degree from a conflict between conscious aspirations and ideals which push him in one direction, and repressed impulses which drive him in the other. It's the fact that so much of our mental energy is wasted in such conflicts, and that our preoccupation with them keeps us standing still instead of growing up emotionally, that is the chief reason why most of us are so much less happy than we could be. So far as you are concerned, the way to grow up and be happy is to solve your conflicts by discovering and accepting yourself as you are, not as you think you "should be"—and then taking the same attitude toward other people. For until you've learned to get on with yourself, you won't be able to adjust yourself to anyone or anything else.

CHAPTER II

MAKING FRIENDS WITH YOURSELF

NEARLY ALL THAT REMAINS of Dr. Alfred Adler's attempt to set up his own school of psychology is the single phrase "inferiority complex." But that phrase struck a responsive chord in the collective heart of mankind, and to this day about half the people who are maladjusted and believe they "know what is the matter with them" give it as their explanation.

It is only too true that most of us sometimes suffer from an aching feeling of "inferiority," but this is by no means based on the memory of our childish sense of weakness and helplessness compared with grown-ups, to which Adler attached such importance. The person to whom each of us mainly feels inferior is *himself*—that is, the ideal self which his imagination and his childish terror of his real self have created. And, strangely enough, the feeling of inferiority to their ideals is often strongest in the very people who come nearest to achieving or surpassing other people's

I was for years the close friend and pastoral assistant of a man whose life and spirit were as nearly "Christlike" as I think a human being's can be. In all the time that I knew him, the Rev. John G. never, to my knowledge, did a cruel or dishonourable thing or spoke a word which he did not mean to be kind. He was the sort of man of whom people said that his smile was a benediction. And what's more, except for one tragedy—his only son's untimely death—he was as fortunate as his friends felt he deserved. His health was good; he never lacked enough money for his simple needs, he had an adoring wife and family, and he was loved, admired, and respected by everyone who knew him. And yet in his ninetieth year this true saint, if there ever was one, told me: "I do not think I have ever had a happy day in my life. There has never been a day—in fact, there has hardly been an hour—when the knowledge of my sins and failures has not tortured me almost beyond endurance." And while I admit the statement represented partly a mood of depression

and partly an attitude unconsciously assumed because it was the way the dear man thought a Christian should feel, I believe that it was basically true and sincere. Mr. G. had missed the way to happiness, and what—as I now see—led him off the track were the “ideals” he cherished so devoutly

Ideals and Reality

For however noble they may sound, ideals will not make you happy unless they conform to the realities of human nature; and of that we may say, as Lord Bacon did: “Nature is not governed except by obeying her.” We should ridicule an engineer who tried to build a bridge considering only what he felt that its materials *ought* to carry without trying to find out how much stress they would actually stand. Yet since the beginning of recorded time men have been setting moral standards for themselves and one another which we now know are beyond the capacities of human nature. And thousands of us still do this. Witness the contemporary religious movement which adjures its members to be “absolutely pure, absolutely honest, and absolutely unselfish”—as if any child of ten might not know that the one thing these demands have in common is that they are absolutely impossible. How far words like “selfish” and “unselfish” have psychologically valid meaning I do not know. But research into the depths of the unconscious mind has at least proved that no one ever yet has done or could do anything except in the fundamental hope of getting some personal satisfaction from it—in fact, that hope is the motive power of all behaviour. And the only difference between the people we call selfish and those we call unselfish is whether the satisfaction they seek includes or excludes the happiness of others.

Certain earnest souls have denounced psychoanalysts for “denying the existence of sin.” We most certainly do not deny the *sense of sin*, on the contrary, we recognize it as one of the most important of all psychological phenomena. But whether that sense has any basic reality behind it—whether any given act or state of mind is sinful *per se*—we regard as outside of our province. All we know is that in practice the effect of calling something a sin is to create emotional confusion, since the fear that is aroused by doing this makes it impossible to unearth

the motives which inspired the action or to judge accurately what its results have been or will be. To accuse someone of "sin" will invariably put him on the defensive, and force him to lay a mental "smoke-screen" in which he and we alike will lose our bearings. For that reason, the first thing an analyst tells his patient is to try to disregard all moral or æsthetic elements and look at his acts and feelings as objectively as though they were the weather, or a chemical reaction.

Repression can lead to Murder

Not so long ago a patient said to me with obviously forced casualness: "You know, Mr. Gould, I killed my mother." In appearance Miss P, a refined, unmarried woman of what used to be called "uncertain age," was one of the last people on earth from whom one would have expected this sort of confession, but if there is anything an analyst learns, it is never to be surprised at anything or anybody Just as if Miss P. had said she had been delayed in the subway, I inquired "How did it happen?" Miss P had her explanation ready-made it was a "mercy killing" Her mother was dying slowly from inoperable cancer and suffering great pain, and it seemed an obvious act of kindness to put her out of her misery with an overdose of morphine.

I accepted Miss P's story without question, but it soon became clear that she didn't. As she lost her fear that I would condemn her action, she was gradually able to release the repressed feelings which, as she eventually came to see, had been the real cause of the killing Actually she had, as she confessed, secretly hated her mother ever since she could remember—partly out of jealousy for the obvious preference shown a younger brother. Her hostility increased when, after she grew up, the brother married, while she found herself unwillingly cast for the role of the "devoted daughter" whose duty it was to make Mother comfortable in her old age The unfairness of this from her standpoint, coupled with her loneliness and the financial and physical burdens of her mother's lingering illness, finally proved more than she could bear, and she reached the point where, having found what she regarded as a reasonable excuse, she was ready to make sure she would not have to endure the situation any longer.

Miss P, I assure you, had no *conscious* idea of what had really happened until the analysis revealed it to her. By that time no useful purpose would have been served by my taking any steps toward seeing that she was punished, even if I could have done so from the standpoint of law (I had no real evidence), or from that of professional ethics. What had been accomplished, though, was that Miss P. had reached a stage of understanding of herself in which she never could commit another such act without realizing why she did it, and I need not say that if she realized this, she would not act at all. She was able to arrive at this stage *just because* at no time did I criticize or blame her for what the law might have held to be a murder; in fact, by abstaining from this I helped her to give up blaming herself, as she had secretly been doing, and so freed her to face the realities of her feelings and behaviour. If she had been able from the first to recognize her hostile feelings toward her mother as the natural and inevitable reaction they were, she would not have been afraid to let herself be conscious of the *wish* to get the burden off her shoulders. But because she saw this wish for what it was, she could not have devised the "rationalization" of a mercy killing that permitted her to satisfy it. The same principle applies not only in unusual cases like Miss P's, but always and to everybody.

Should You be Dissatisfied with Yourself?

A good many people still think that the recognition of one's faults and misdeeds and self-criticism for them are necessary spurs to progress. My New England mother made it one of her chief aims in life to keep me from becoming what she called "conceited." She believed, as many parents still do, that dissatisfaction with yourself and an acute sense of your own shortcomings are essential as an urge to self-improvement, and that to call anyone "self-satisfied" is equivalent to saying that he is smug, lazy, unambitious, and a drag on the wheels of progress.

The truth is, however, that self-condemnation leads to nothing except inner conflict and neurosis. Any time you feel guilty or ashamed of yourself, something far down inside you—possibly so far down that you are entirely unconscious of it—reacts just as you would if someone else called you hard names. As instinctively as you would blink to get a cinder out of your eye, you start

fighting off the accusation, and in doing so dodge the real issue, which is simply what mistakes you have made and how to avoid them in the future.

"Self-love," by the moral standards that I was brought up on, was the worst sin of all—that which alienates a man from his Creator. And yet the truth is that self-love in the broad sense of solicitude for one's own welfare and well-being is not only as natural as breathing, but as necessary to human existence. A person who actually is "completely selfless" might even die of starvation because it would not occur to him to bother eating. Basically we all love ourselves and always will. What makes us unhappy—and perhaps the deepest source of all unhappiness—is the feeling that we have no right to do this

"What sort of Person am I?"

The main concern of the average neurotic as well as of many of us who believe that we are normal is: "What sort of person am I?" That is why such fortunes are spent each year on graphologists, astrologists, palmists, and others who offer a short and easy answer to it. But behind this question is the deeper query. "Am I such a person as I dare approve of?" which in turn means, "Do I have a right to like myself as I cannot help wanting to do?" And most of the time, whatever reassurance anyone may give us or whatever credit we may try to claim for our most strenuous or sacrificial efforts, the question remains unanswered.

Startling as it may sound, no one ever tried to be "good" except to defend himself against the accusation that he was somehow "bad." But for this we should all be merely content to do what we believed would make us happy. I am not denying that all normal people have an impulse to do what are known as "good" things—like dragging a child out of a burning building, or selecting a profession partly because it is useful. But they do these things because they seem worth doing and not for the merit or virtue that is artificially attached to them. Henry James the Elder, in his little-known book, *The Secret of Swedenborg*, makes a significant distinction between what he calls "moral" and "spiritual" people, "spiritual" people being those who do right because they enjoy it, and "moral" people

those who do it from a sense of duty, or because they are afraid they will be punished, either in this world or in the next, if they do not.

In this sense, morality is not only obviously selfish, since its chief or only concern is one's own "spiritual welfare": it can also be extremely cruel, as whoever has had much experience with conventionally moral or religious people can't help knowing only too well. There is, for example, the way in which this sort of "good" people feel impelled to emphasize their virtue by drawing their skirts away from the contamination of the sinner. I recall a luckless young man and young woman who were living as husband and wife without benefit of clergy because of a legal technicality which prevented the man's getting a divorce. (His legal wife was an avowed Lesbian, which is not a "ground for divorce" in New York State.) The young people were by training good churchgoers and wanted to find a church affiliation, but although I canvassed several denominations, I could not find one that would admit them, and I blush to say that this included my own congregation.

Suppose We stopped "Blaming"

But suppose we succeed in eliminating the unrealistic and unscientific concepts of praise and blame from our thinking about ourselves or our neighbours, to what sort of practical position will it lead us? Shall we find ourselves condoning or excusing actions which are obviously "bad" in the sense of causing needless suffering to the doer or to others?

Certainly not. For one thing, making excuses is precisely the result of judging actions from what might be called the "praise-blame" standpoint. No one, for example, could more fully recognize than I the danger of allowing such a man as Heinrich Himmler to infest the world, nor could more deeply abhor his behaviour. Yet I can feel this way while realizing from my standpoint that Himmler was what he was as the result of physical and mental causes over which I have no reason to believe he had any control, and that arguing over whether he "could have been different if he had wanted to" is completely futile, for the simple reason that he was so constituted that he could not "want to."

Try to take this attitude toward your own faults and shortcomings. Assume that your feelings and behaviour have been end-results of causes in your mind and your environment which you could not control, so that even though it may not seem so, what you did or felt in any given situation was the only thing you could do or feel in the circumstances. This leaves you as free as ever—in fact, freer—to determine what the forces were that led you to a given line of action, and whether the results it produced were desirable, everything considered. And if they were not, there is still nothing to prevent your acting differently in the future now that you “know better.” You will not only be free to stop torturing yourself with self-condemnation but will no longer attempt to gloss over what you have done—or blame somebody else for it—in order to dodge the “pangs of conscience.”

I have often wondered why it never seems to have occurred to Christians to apply to themselves the command of Jesus, “Judge not!” For as surely as the law would not permit a judge to try a case in which he was personally interested, on the valid ground that he could not help but be biased one way or the other (that is, either frankly work for his own interests, or lean over backward trying not to do this) so certainly the last person any of us can be really competent to judge as to his final merits is—himself.

When Our Wants Conflict

But of course our tendency to blame ourselves for feelings which we cannot help is not the only thing that keeps us from getting the satisfactions that would make us happy. An equally serious complication is the fact that our wants themselves may conflict with each other, so that it is never possible to gratify them all completely. Think what happens when as children we first venture into the new, terrifying world of the schoolroom. We want—oh, so much!—to have the other children like us; but we want just as intensely to have our own way and run things to please ourselves without bothering about anybody else's feelings. What's more, there is no solution of this conflict but a *compromise* between our “self-will” and our “social will” (as these mutually hostile desires are sometimes called); and to satisfy either completely at the expense of the other means a

psychologically dangerous frustration, or becoming "anti-social." Most neurotics are people who have attempted to smother their self-will in order to gain approval—at first from their parents, and afterward from themselves; while most "undesirable citizens" have done the converse.

You can't Always be "Consistent"

And so we come to a basic principle of mature, realistic living: the pursuit of happiness is—as the British say of politics—"the science of the second best." We cannot hope to be happy by rigid adherence to a rule or formula because rigidity (that is, consistency) is at variance with the nature we were born with. And the fact that we dare not admit this is one reason why most so-called "ideals" prove in practice to be only sources of unhappiness and inner conflict.

Every now and then I get a letter from some male correspondent which runs something like this: "I am forty years old and have been married for fifteen years to a woman whom I am devotedly in love with. We have two wonderful children and a home that is as nearly perfect as you could find. Yet the other day we had a party at the office and after a couple of drinks I found myself kissing one of the attractive secretaries with an ardour I have not felt in years. What on earth can be the matter with me? Is my whole idea that I love my wife and family imagination, or am I just an ordinary rotter? And what would my wife think if she ever heard about it—as might quite easily happen in a small town like the one we live in?"

The first thought which comes into my mind is that there probably are aspects of this man's relations with his wife, particularly on the sexual level, which are not so perfect as he likes to believe—indeed, the assertion that one has achieved a perfect marriage is itself suggestive of at least some self-deception. But however nearly perfect this man's marriage is, he is still demanding too much of himself—and human nature—in expecting to be free of casual impulses which do not jibe with his usual and conscious pattern of life. And again, if he could accept the naturalness of such impulses, he would be much better able to decide how far it was wise to indulge them at the risk of harming a relationship which is so much more important to him in the long run.

What about Auto-suggestion?

You may possibly have noticed that I have ignored the various forms of reassuring auto-suggestion which are popularly supposed to help a person to "build up his ego." Telling yourself that you are a fine or noble person no more permanently silences the still, small voice of self-doubt than does making plausible excuses for the things you are ashamed of. There is little more use in attempting to achieve a good opinion of yourself than in feeling that modesty requires you to have a bad one. So far as a final judgment of your worth goes, the one sane and sound opinion is *none at all*. You are what you are, and time will eventually show just how much that "amounts to." Meanwhile, there are at least some things you have learned to do which have brought satisfaction to you and to others, and nothing but your own fears can stop your training yourself to do more and better.

To make friends with yourself means taking the same attitude toward yourself which in the long run you must take toward anybody with whom you want to remain on good terms. This is to accept yourself as you are and try to see what there is in you that can be used as or developed into a means of attaining satisfaction for your needs and desires. Except for this, there is no reason why you should be any more aware of yourself than you are of your digestive system, of which you are conscious only when it's out of order. There is no use in your bothering over whether you are selfish or unselfish, or straining yourself to achieve the "petty consistency" which Emerson called the "hobgoblin of little minds." A person who really had made friends with himself would be completely unself-conscious; he would be too busy trying to find happiness in the world about him to have any time left over for mere introspection. But, conversely, if you *are* self-conscious, it is your doubts about yourself or your outright self-condemnation that are the cause of your troubles. And self-consciousness is perhaps the most frequent and least necessary of all ways of making yourself miserable.

Self-consciousness

At its worst, this usually rather mild neurosis may create acute "nervous symptoms," such as stammering, blushing, the strange

spasms called tics, and even the inability to go outdoors without collapsing from sheer panic. It is also one of the main causes of excessive drinking—many shy folks can enjoy a social gathering only after they have drowned their fear of the impression they may make in a few cocktails. And even in milder forms, self-consciousness may keep you from making friends easily, from success in business, or from getting married.

Ask the average self-conscious person nowadays how he got that way and he'll probably explain that he has an inferiority complex, and may try to justify this on the basis of some minor physical peculiarity or defect. John has acne, Mary is overweight, Arthur has speech difficulties (which are really a result, not the cause of his trouble), Ethel is a little hard of hearing, and so on through the whole catalogue of supposed inferiorities. The truth is, of course, that almost everyone has something odd about him, and that many painfully self-conscious people are well above average in looks, intelligence, and standard of behaviour. For example, if report is to be credited, one of the most painfully self-conscious people in the world is Greta Garbo.

If you are self-conscious, it is often, as you believe, about something you have no real reason to take seriously. But in fact, the defect or shortcoming to which you attribute your sense of inferiority is just the peg on which you hang deeper, unconscious feelings, based on memories of childish shortcomings and of failure to live up to what you thought someone expected of you.

Elwood B attributed a degree of self-consciousness which had made him practically a hermit to the fact that he had been born with the little finger of his left hand missing. He was firmly convinced that this was the first thing people noticed when he came into a room, and my assurance that I had not seen it until after I had known him for months made no impression on him. His real difficulty proved to centre on the fact that as a child he had once overheard his mother saying to a woman friend, "I don't know what I ever could have done to deserve a son who is a cripple." Since a child's sense of his own value depends largely on the feeling that his parents, and especially his mother, love him, this poor lad could not help but develop the vague sense of having something morally or

personally wrong with him, which as a grown-up he came to embody in the way that he imagined everyone reacted to his being "deformed."

"First Aid" for Self-conscious People

I do not imagine that what I have said will cure you at once of being self-conscious—especially if you have been so for a large part of your life. But there are some methods of what might be called "first aid" in dealing with your problem which in my experience work in all but extreme cases. The main technique is to train yourself to *direct your attention away from yourself* to other things and people.

One fact which few of us fully realize is that whereas in our own minds we are generally in the centre of the spotlight, with the rest of mankind making up an audience to which we attribute all the criticisms we might make of ourselves in our darkest moments, the truth is that to the other fellow it is he who holds the stage and we who sit down in the front row. Most people we meet, particularly of the other sex, are far too much concerned about the impression *they* are making on *us* to have time to form a clear impression of us at all, so that at least nine-tenths of the time and worry we spend over the impression we are making on them is wasted effort.

Start looking to see if this is not true, and you'll kill several birds with one stone. For while you are studying other people, you will be too busy to be conscious of your own fears. You'll begin to realize how many folks are in the same boat as you are—quite as much afraid of you as you are of them. But besides this, if you keep your interest in other people sympathetic, you'll be doing more than you can in any other way to make them like you. Because people do not really like you nearly so much for the sort of person they imagine you are as for the way they think you feel toward them; and there is no feeling they appreciate so much as seeming interest in them and in what they're saying. A good listener can make most people think he is intelligent without even opening his mouth.

One amusing and effective way of turning your attention away from yourself and on to other people is to ask yourself how you'd describe them if you were putting them into a story. By the time you have decided (without too obvious staring)

that the man you've just met might be pictured as "a large, slender man with weary dark eyes and a pinched mouth," you will have forgotten you were wondering whether he would notice that your nose was a bit shiny.

You can get the same result by listening to what people say (how often do you really do that?) and trying as honestly as possible to see their point of view on what they're talking about. If the subject—let's say it is baseball—bores you, try to figure out what makes it interesting to *them*. And before you realize it, you will also have enriched your own life with new interests or hobbies. But mainly, remember that you'll never cure self-consciousness by thinking about yourself, no matter how favourably, but that anything outside yourself upon which you can rivet your attention will help you to forget your self-absorption.

Releasing Energy

Finally, to make friends with yourself is to free almost incredibly large amounts of energy for other purposes which are far more useful both to you and to your neighbours. I have long maintained, for instance, that most of the greatest works of art have been "pot-boilers." I do not believe that Shakespeare was especially concerned about his merits as a playwright or a poet; he needed to make a living, and was lucky enough to have found that the sort of plays he enjoyed writing would provide his bread and butter—and sometimes a piece of cake for dessert. There may have been men who have achieved creative success for the primary purpose of showing the world their genius, but as far as most of us are concerned, the moment the question of our personal ability or merits comes into our minds, the flow of "inspiration" ceases. I might even say out of my own experience that, without belittling hard work, I have almost uniformly found the articles I wrote with the least effort were the most successful, and I think this has been because in these cases I've been able to forget either my doubts of my own skill or my desire to display it, and have concentrated on what I wanted to say and the most effective way to say it.

Finally, you *must* accept yourself before you can grow up emotionally. If you can imagine something as absurd as an oak tree believing that it ought to be an elm, or a wolf possessed,

with the idea that it is his duty to become a lapdog, you may get some notion of how futile it is for a human being to condemn himself for being what he is by nature, or to attempt to "make himself over." The only result of this must be to block development or force it into morbid and unnatural channels. As this book will try to show, there is more in you *as you are* than you have probably dared allow yourself to believe, but the only way to let it come out is to free yourself of the unconscious fears and inhibitions that have paralysed or blocked it.

You need not fear that there is anything about your real self that is dangerous or evil. From the standpoint of morality your inborn nature is as neutral as atomic energy and has an equal range of possibilities for good or bad depending on the use to which you put it. And if you can free yourself from fear, your intelligence will guide you into using your native capacities and urges to achieve the happiness that is your birthright.

CHAPTER III

WHERE HAPPINESS BEGINS—AND MAY END

SUPPOSE YOU HAVE AGREED in principle to accept yourself—or try to—just what would you be accepting? What new facts about the oldest of old subjects, human nature, has dynamic psychology discovered?

As you doubtless have already gathered, one is that “the pursuit of happiness” is an even bigger, more persistent issue in our lives than most of us have dared to admit. You may put the hope of happiness aside in one form—or think you have done so—but before long it will crop up in another. For example, having made up your mind that you can’t be happy yourself, you find yourself seeking happiness at second-hand through someone else—a child or protégé—with whom you have set up what psychology calls an “identification.” In fact, if you had no happiness at all, it is likely that you would not even keep on living, since the “will to live” itself is really the will to *enjoy life*.

But as we probe deeper into human nature, we find that “happiness” is a secondary and a comparatively adult idea. The baby knows nothing about nutrition—all he knows is that he wants his dinner, right now, and he’ll scream with rage or terror if he doesn’t get it. In the same way, the infantile part of us which represents our instincts in their primitive state knows nothing about anything as abstract as happiness. It wants *pleasure* in the simplest, most immediate forms. And since our mature selves do not replace the selves we were born with, but are outgrowths and elaborations of them, dynamic psychology has demonstrated that the wish for pleasure is not outgrown, but always remains the secret motive power of our behaviour. Everything that you, or I, or anybody else does is done basically to get pleasure—or, conversely, to avoid pain. This law is the “Pleasure Principle,” which is to modern psychology what the law of gravitation was to the Newtonian physics.

Human beings actually differ from one another mainly in the

relative amount of thought and energy which they devote to the pursuit of pleasure on the one hand and to the avoidance of pain on the other. And this is no less true even though what they believe will give them pleasure sometimes proves eventually to cause pain, or vice versa. And so, learning how to get a maximum of pleasure with a minimum of pain—using both words in the widest sense imaginable—is the way to enjoy life, or be happy.

Pleasure's Sexual Component

But while even in this form the "Pleasure Principle" may shock those who believe that pleasure as such is ignoble or unworthy, the next fact which study of the mind's depths has uncovered is at first still more disturbing. Indeed, its discovery and statement are what gave dynamic psychology a bad name with many people and made Freud himself for many years the victim of neglect, contempt, or even persecution. In the broad sense (to be explained later) *all pleasure has a basic sexual component* which has much the same relation to it that vitamins have to food. And the more our fear of pain (that is, of punishment or moral guilt) drives us to try to get on without sexual satisfaction, the more of our energies we waste, either in endless struggles with "temptation," or in never quite successful efforts to repress our natural instincts. This preoccupation with sex, which may be largely unconscious, comes most clearly to the surface in the course of psychoanalytic treatment, when, as Dr. Charles Berg says, "Most patients . . . without the slightest interference or question or suggestion from the analyst soon come to the question of sexuality. Having come to it, they remain on it for what may seem to the beginner an inordinate length of time."

The reason, of course, is that it is the needs and wishes which have been frustrated, not those which are satisfied, that we are most likely to become obsessed with. Moralists accuse us as a people of being "obsessed with sex," and offer as evidence the movies, most popular fiction, and the emphasis on "sex appeal" in advertising. But what all this really shows is how far we have fallen short of satisfying our instinctive sexual needs. And the fear which is responsible for this condition is reflected in the rarity with which any of the media I have mentioned discuss or depict sex honestly and frankly.

There are a few "realistic" (and occasionally pornographic) novels in which sexual matters are discussed in lurid detail, but these are read by only a very small part of the public. So far as the movies or the radio—or, in fact, the average fiction story—is concerned, sex is a side of life whose natural preliminaries, such as kissing, are enormously important, but which as a whole must not be mentioned, and is presumed not to come into the minds of "nice" young men and women. I remember the programme director of one radio station absolutely forbidding me to use the word "sex," although practically every problem I discussed really turned on sexual issues. I evaded the restriction by talking about "the mating instinct."

Picture and Reality

The contrast between the picture of the part sex plays in life with which we try to delude the younger generation and the facts of our—and their—behaviour would be ludicrous if it were not occasionally tragic. The majority of boys and girls know better than to swallow the absurdities with which we try to feed them, but every so often we encounter someone who has taken our professed moral standards seriously, with disastrous results. Not so long ago I had a letter from a nice young woman who confessed that one romantic evening she and her fiancé had been so carried away by their emotions that they had "gone the whole way" in sexual intimacy. She wanted to know whether she could ever hope to regain her self-respect or the respect of her sweetheart, and whether the prospects of their marriage were not doomed irrevocably by the cloud of guilt which would forever hang over their heads.

Fortunately, I could at least try to reassure her. I told her I felt sure that a very large share of all married couples nowadays have had sexual relations prior to the wedding ceremony, and that though no doubt the sense of guilt associated with their memory of this does frequently somewhat mar their later happiness, many of them achieve a successful union in spite of it. Actually, Dr. Lewis M. Terman, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Stanford University, reported in a book he wrote nearly ten years ago that a study of hundreds of married couples showed that of those married within ten years, only 14 per cent.

of the men and 32 per cent of the women had been sexually chaste up to their wedding night, and went on to say that if what seemed to be the present trend continues, "virginity at marriage will be close to the vanishing point for males marrying after 1955 and for girls marrying after 1960"

Effects of Hypocrisy

As regards sex practices and feelings short of actual intercourse, the effect of popular hypocrisy is still worse, as witness a letter I received since I began the writing of this book but could not answer for the reason that the luckless writer—an unmarried woman thirty-one years old—could not bring herself to sign it with her full name. She says she has had two so-called nervous breakdowns which she blames on the fact that she has "sexual desires, especially when I fall in love . . . I can't talk to my mother about these things because when I had my breakdown the doctor said it was sex and she scolds me all day long about being nervous. She tells me I am sex crazy Mr. Gould, is there no hope for me? Must I go through life being so different [sic] from other people? I am also different because I masturbated till I was nine years old . . . I know so many unmarried girls who are not nervous or tense, and I am so ashamed of myself. I want to be pure in heart and mind, but I can't keep from having these terrible thoughts about love and marriage When I fall in love, I think about sexual desires and I desire the man I love. I don't want to be bad, but they keep coming into my mind. I feel so ashamed of myself. I feel I am such a terrible person that I cannot even be with decent people. I know unmarried people are not supposed to have sexual desires, but I can't help having them Do you think that if I had my ovaries and glands removed, I might stop being such an awful person?"

This unhappy woman's belief that in having sexual desires she is "different" from other people is one kind of result of the long conspiracy of silence on the subject of sex which is at last being broken down against almost frantic opposition from those who still cling to the idea that people won't be "tempted" to seek sexual pleasure if they can be kept from finding out that others do so. Yet the actual effect of forced ignorance is more often to make normal young folks feel that they are "monsters

of depravity" and to drive them into mental illness. It is still far from uncommon to meet a young man who believes he has "discovered" masturbation, but that does not prevent his feeling "intuitively" that the practice somehow stamps him as a moral outcast.

An Impressive Victory

A real and impressive victory in the battle against sexual obscurantism is the publication of the scientific study, *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*, by Dr Alfred C Kinsey, assisted by Messrs Wardell B. Pomeroy and Clyde E. Martin. For not only does this book confirm what most of us have been saying for years but could support only from limited instances, it has put a mass of sorely needed information within the potential reach of people to whom it will mean what it might have meant to the last woman I mentioned. Because the "Kinsey Report" has been widely circulated among college students of both sexes, opponents have charged that its appeal is largely pornographic. But the truth is, what its readers look for is not an excuse for further "self-indulgence"; it is relief from the sense of being isolated and uniquely depraved because of what they have done already, and would go on doing even if no such book ever had been published.

Dr. Kinsey gives us figures, and I for one am convinced that they are reasonably accurate ones as well as more widely representative than hostile critics have charged. But what he does not give—or attempt to give—is a description of how sex hypocrisy has warped the feelings of the great majority of people, or of its effect on sex in marriage. For, of course, the frequency of intercourse of married people is no indication of how satisfying their relations are, or of how large a share of broken or unhappy marriages is the result of sexual maladjustment. A census on this score would be much more difficult than Dr. Kinsey's, if only because a lot of married people who are sexually maladjusted and frustrated do not realize it; for example, there are many, many women who still don't know that sex "is supposed to" give them pleasure; they imagine it is something that a wife does "from a sense of duty," or "to please her husband." My guess—and I think it is a fairly good one—would

be that perhaps 10 per cent of present-day Americans have achieved sexually satisfying marriages, 10 per cent. have managed—either by the substitution of some other form of sensuous satisfaction, such as overeating, or by living in a world of day-dreams—to adjust themselves to going without any conscious sex life, while the other 80 per cent. lead what Thoreau called “lives of quiet desperation,” alternating between temporary success in the effort to repress their hungers and more or less frequent “moral lapses” which bring more anguish than relief in the long run.

Fear Worse than Ignorance

Of course, lack of sexual information is not the main reason why this is so. The main reason is the fear of sex and everything connected with it which has kept the subject taboo so long.

The first and outstanding shock dynamic psychology inflicted on the public consciousness came with the announcement of Freud's “sexual theory of the neuroses”—the assertion that he had found all neuroses to involve, if not to rest upon, frustration, inhibition, or distortion of the sex urge. But the response to this idea involved two major misinterpretations. First, the public failed to realize that for his own good and sufficient reasons Freud did not use the word “sex” to apply exclusively to the functions of the generative organs; and second, it was assumed that, from his standpoint, all one had to do to escape from the consequences of sexual frustration was to find some sort of sexual outlet.

On this latter point I will suggest a way in which you can infallibly distinguish between someone with real psychoanalytic training and someone who is an amateur, no matter if he has the magic letters “M D” after his name. It is that no analyst would ever tell a person—as too many doctors with a smattering of psychiatric knowledge have been known to do—to “go out and have an affair,” or, in a man's case, “go to a prostitute.” Any competent psychoanalyst would recognize that such a remedy is usually worse than the disease, because the very fears and inhibitions which have kept the person sexually repressed would be dangerously aroused by attempting to defy them.

A young man about town whom I will call Philip W. is an excellent example of how far real sexual freedom is from unrestricted sex behaviour. Philip's ambition, as he frankly says, is "to sleep with a new girl every night," and since he happens to be personable as well as wealthy, he comes nearer than most men could to achieving just that. Yet to anyone who knows dynamic psychology, the very persistence of Philip's quest for complete sexual satisfaction proves that he is not finding it, and may unconsciously be looking for it in the wrong direction. Actually, he himself hunted the real cause of his difficulties when he said that he liked girls who were "slim and boyish-looking" and who did not have what he called "too much figure." The probable truth is that, like many other men we call "wolves," Philip really wants a member of his own sex, and is driven to his "conquests" mainly by the need to prove to himself that he is the complete male which at heart he knows he is not.

The real cause of sexual frustration is *the fear and guilt associated with sex pleasure* which mankind has always felt to some degree, but which we of to-day have inherited in an exaggerated form from the Victorian era. I can think of no better example of the way Victorian convention tried to make its victims feel about sex than the fact that the old medical term for the generative organs was "pudendum," which means "that of which one ought to be ashamed." Indeed, it has been well said that the cause of most of man's emotional struggles is his effort to ignore the fact that, although he has become vastly more intelligent and powerful than any other animal, he is still an animal by unalterable instinct.

For convenience, let us use the phrase "sex guilt" for the whole complex of fear, shame, and "pathological modesty" of which practically every man and woman has some traces. The question of how and where this started in the human race as a whole is too big to be discussed here, but there is very little question of where you and I acquired it. It was handed down to us by our parents, who in turn were saddled with it by their parents, and so on as far back as civilized history goes. There are many ways in which our parents warped our attitude toward our own natures, but the motive behind all of them was the same: it was to help themselves forget that *they* once had the same

impulses as we have, and expressed them in the same ways until they in turn were frightened into more or less complete repression

Sex not Purely Physical

The most frequent error in popular thinking about sex is the idea that it is "purely physical" or "carnal." For practical purposes, we may distinguish between those thoughts and desires which are aimed directly at attaining sexual pleasure and those which have other conscious objectives. It is possible, for instance, to admire the character of someone who does not attract you sexually or—especially with a neurotic—to be overwhelmed with sexual passion for a person whom you hate or despise. But in either case the feeling is still *in the mind*, not simply in the body. The reason why all men of equal sexual potency are not equally aroused by the same woman is that the attractiveness of any woman depends upon the associations she awakens in you—your standards of beauty, for example. It is said that certain South Sea Islanders find white people repulsive because of their long, sharp noses. The native, that is, associates beauty with the flat nose of the women he has known and loved best. Again the intensity of passion which you feel for anyone, even the person whom you are in love with, will vary according to your *mood* as much as, if not more than, the degree of "tension" in your sexual organs. Sexual desire in normal men and women represents a need *of the whole person*, and therefore the mind, whose task it is to meet the needs of the whole person, is the seat of sexual feeling. Still another evidence of this is that mere physical release of tension in which our emotions are unsatisfied may be almost as frustrating as no release at all.

Broader Meanings of "Sex"

Until now, like Dr. Kinsey and most other people, I have used the word "sex" only in the popular and incomplete sense. Dynamic psychology employs it not simply of the generative organs and their functions, but of the whole range of sensuous pleasure of which coitus is but the culmination. What most people call "sex" is in fact the final stage of a long, complex process known as "psycho-sexual evolution." This begins at

, birth, or even before birth, and goes side by side with other aspects of emotional development to adulthood. In fact, since sex plays the major role it does in our lives, the degree of sexual maturity that anyone has achieved is the best measure of his maturation as a person.

From this standpoint, life's first sexual pleasure is that which the baby finds in nursing; and if you have ever watched a healthy baby at its mother's breast, this statement won't surprise you. The mouth is thus the original "sex organ" and, as we shall see, never entirely loses that function. This stage of our sexual and emotional life is technically known as "oral." And, of course, it is the *sensuous pleasure* that the baby finds in suckling when he is hungry, not the abstract need of nourishment, that makes him so avid for the nipple.

By degrees during the first few weeks and months of life, the baby recognizes that some of his other bodily sensations also can be pleasurable, and does what he can to promote these sensations and avoid those which are painful. He finds in particular that there is intense pleasure in the functions of elimination, for which reason this stage of the psycho-sexual development is called "anal." But here for the first time the formerly unhampered individual comes in conflict with the demands of the world to which he must adjust his quest of pleasure. He is faced with "toilet training," with results often more serious than has been realized until now. In fact, the late Dr. Sándor Ferenczi used to say "morality begins with the sphincter," and in my opinion the true "original sin"—the source of man's primal consciousness of conflict with a higher power—is bed-wetting. On the basis of such ideas there has been a veritable revolution in the attitude of pediatricians toward toilet training, which they now urge to have deferred to an age which Grandma would have thought indecent.

However, the conflicts at the anal stage are often mild compared with those that take place when the parents find that their "innocent baby" has discovered the delights he can achieve by stimulation of his genitals, and is acting on that discovery. Yet so far from being a mark of unique depravity, as the frightened parents think it, such behaviour probably occurs with all infants, male or female, at some time in the first year or two of their lives. And the fear and horror with

which parents react to it seems to be the primary source of sex guilt in most of us, even though all recollection of it is completely repressed. One proof of this is the seemingly instinctive bias with regard to sexual information which we find so often when children are faced with it for what they think is the first time. I remember a young woman telling me that her first knowledge of the "facts of life" came at the age of twelve, when she was told "how babies are made" by a playmate. She described with deep emotion the shame and abhorrence this discovery aroused in her mind, but when I asked her how she knew such facts were shameful if she had no previous impressions on the subject, she could find no answer. The fact is, of course, that if she had not somehow acquired a strong feeling that the generative organs were disgusting, learning their biological purpose would have been no more a shock than finding out why an automobile needs a carburettor.

The Sex Urge finds an Object

But while all the pleasures we have been discussing have been fundamentally self-centred—confined to and able to be aroused by the child's own actions—it is not long till he makes the great discovery upon which it might be said that all human relations are based: the discovery that contact with another person is or may be much more pleasurable than self-stimulation. The importance of this fact cannot be overstated, since if we were sexually self-sufficient, the primal cohesive force, not only of the family, but of all personal human contacts would be lacking. Normally, the other person in relation to whom the great discovery is made is the child's mother, and she, therefore, becomes the first natural object of sexual interest, regardless of the child's sex. The fact that a girl in this sense more or less inevitably begins life with homosexual leanings complicates her psycho-sexual evolution in ways which we may consider later, though it usually is not too long until instinct makes her realize that her father's kisses and caresses are somehow more stimulating than her mother's.

But along with this beginning of "object love" there develops still another source of guilt and inner conflict. For the beloved object has by now come to be realized as belonging to the other parent, and is therefore sexually, and to some extent

emotionally, taboo. Around this fact centres the much-discussed Oedipus complex, based, of course, on the Greek myth of the man who unwittingly killed his father and married his mother, and whose guilt, when he found what he had done, made him punish himself by putting out his eyes and going into voluntary exile.

As a rule the conflict over the "Oedipus situation" results in the child's repressing more or less completely the whole problem of heterosexual interest and devoting itself to the members of its own sex. For a period running roughly from the age of five to that of twelve years, the average child's sex life remains in a state of what is known as "latency" or even of "normal homosexuality." At the same time, elements of heterosexual interest may appear, particularly in the form of curiosity or exhibitionism, and these are quite natural and harmless if the child is not made to feel ashamed or guilty about them.

Adolescent Problems

Finally come puberty and adolescence with their special problems, first of which is the deliberate release of sex tension by the method known as masturbation.

Here again there is a devastating contrast between moral theory and practice. A number of years ago I had a letter from a man living one hundred miles or so from New York who wished to come to the city to consult me. When he appeared in my office, I saw that he was a rather haggard-looking individual in his early fifties, who immediately told me that he had been "a physical and mental wreck all his life" as the result of masturbation. I quite naturally asked him how much he had gone in for the practice, and his answer was, "Three times, that I remember." I said, "What do you mean? Three times a day?" And he answered, "Three times altogether!"

I tried to explain to him that what he had been suffering from was not the masturbation, which, as I assured him, is practised to some extent by practically all men and at least a fair majority of women, it was the feeling of guilt and shame his childish terrors had associated with it. But I fear that it was too late to convince him, and that he went away considering me a "most immoral person."

Actually, as eminent an authority as Dr. O. Spurgeon English, Professor of Psychiatry at Temple University Medical School in Philadelphia, has said "Most all psychiatrists, psychologists, and educators to-day regard 'masturbation' as a normal phenomenon—indulged in to some degree by all human beings during the course of their development." And I fancy that the relatively few exceptions he concedes to exist are people who dare not violate the teachings of religious dogma on the subject. Yet it is still less than twenty years since one of 'America's most enlightened and high-minded women, the late Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett, was convicted by a United States District Court in Brooklyn and sentenced to fine or imprisonment for the alleged crime of sending "obscene" matters through the mails. And her chief offence was that in a pamphlet, *The Sex Side of Life*, which she wrote for her sons, and which later was adopted by such organizations as the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., she dared to assert that masturbation was a relatively minor moral offence. Happily, the conviction was later reversed by the Circuit Court of Appeals through the instrumentality of a group of liberal lawyers.

The Age of Experiment

The next stage of normal psycho-sexual development after adolescent masturbation is some degree of experimentation with physical intimacy with one or more members of the opposite sex. And this in turn naturally leads—after a length of time which varies with circumstances and the individual's disposition—to marriage and parenthood. But the evolution never is complete. Freud compares it with the progress of a migrant tribe invading a new country: a few tribesmen settle down at each attractive site, while the rest of the mass pushes forward. For example, as I have already noted, the mouth—as in kissing—never wholly ceases to have a place in the normal sexual preliminaries, while the strong erotic interest that a woman's breasts have for a man is another relic of his earliest sexual attachment.

If at any stage of progress the "invasion" is blocked, the whole force of sexual interest may remain centred or "fixated" at the stage where movement was arrested. And that is the origin of the so-called perversions, which invariably represent arrested psycho-sexual growth. It is also possible for what Freud

calls a "pre-genital" sex interest to take the place of a more mature one for a certain length of time I remember, for example, an attractive girl of perhaps sixteen whose mother sent her to me because she "could not stop eating" and was seriously overweight I saw the girl but once, and got nothing of importance from her, but the mother later told me Peggy had admitted she liked being fat because "it kept the boys from bothering her" Three or four years later Peggy had outgrown her inhibitions, fallen in love, and married, and her figure is now normal

Notice and remember that at each stage the instinctive spur to progress is the discovery of a new, more intense form of *pleasure* than had previously been experienced. It is not force or fear that leads a normal young man to lose interest in masturbation once he is happily married—he simply "forgets about it" just as naturally as a child, after his first experience of more interesting diets, loses his exclusive interest in milk But this principle that *pleasure is the guide to progress* leads us to what I believe to be a valid if startling conclusion. If you will agree—and I doubt whether many normal people will deny it—that the most perfect sexual satisfaction is to be found in the embraces of someone whom you love and to whom you have made a satisfactory personal and sexual adjustment, the way to get most people to discover this fact is to leave them free to grow up sexually without blocking their development by frightening them or making them feel guilty over lesser forms of sexual satisfaction.

Where Sex Freedom will Lead

The best proof of this "radical" idea is the usual result of psychoanalysis, one of whose chief aims is to relieve the patient of his sexual and other inhibitions and enable him to do as he decides he really wants to do in view of all the circumstances For, contrary to popular misapprehensions, the usual effect of analysis is to lead a person toward monogamy in sex life. Dr. Edmund Bergler, in *Unhappy Marriage and Divorce*, goes so far as to say "Analysis rarely leads to divorce, but rather to the analysis of the other marriage partner and firmer establishment of the marriage" Indeed, the more nearly anyone approaches emotional maturity, the less sex will be a "moral issue" to him If you become truly adult you will recognize your need of sexual

pleasure with no more shame than you do your need for shelter; and will satisfy it when and in the way that seems most fitting and complete, all other facts and interests considered. You will neither let it drive you into causing needless trouble for yourself or other people, nor let morbid scruples make you thwart it altogether.

The experience of primitive tribes like the Trobriand Islanders described by Dr. Bronislaw Malinowski, late Professor of Anthropology at Yale University, in *The Sexual Life of Savages*, seems to confirm the impression that since marriage is man's natural state, we may trust to Nature and the Pleasure Principle to lead him to it, even when his sexual life is free from legal or social restrictions. For, as Dr. Malinowski describes these "innocents"—who when he spent years among them before World War II were ignorant even of the connection between sexual intercourse and conception—they set practically no restraints on the sexual activity of either sex at any age, yet wound up with contented monogamous marriage, which was rarely broken, even though divorce was not forbidden.

An experiment along the same lines under civilized conditions is that being carried on with boys and girls of grade school age by the radical Scotch educator, Alexander Neill, at his famous Summerhill School. Of the major sexual problem of the average child of this age Mr. Neill writes after twenty-six years' experience "Freedom in masturbation means glad, happy, eager children who are not much interested in masturbation. A masturbation *verbot* means miserable, unhappy children, often prone to colds and epidemics, hating themselves and consequently hating others. I say that the happiness and cleverness of Summerhill children is due to the removal of the boggy of fear and self-hate that such *verbots* give."

Suppression does not Work

One thing, anyhow, is certain: the old method of attempting to control the sex urge by shame and suppression won't work, even from the standpoint of reducing the amount of sexual activity outside of marriage—indeed, it is outside marriage that the average male, at least, has more than half his active sex life. And the Kinsey Report provides the *reductio ad absurdum* of trying to check the sexual impulse by law, since the sole result

has been to make 95 per cent. of our male citizens legal criminals at some time in their lives. The effect of the old method is no better in the case of marriage. As far as I can find, there has never been another country in which the divorce rate was as high as ours is—or soon will be—and I doubt if there was ever one in which as many marriages were as unhappy.

I believe what Mr. Neill says of masturbation is true of all aspects of our sex life. Just as surely as the way to make a man preoccupied with thoughts of food, and plans for stealing it, if necessary, is to keep him hungry, so surely the way to create a neurotic over-absorption in sex and a readiness to seek satisfaction by whatever means come handy is to bring our children up with the impression that parents, society, and even God are in conspiracy to thwart their satisfaction of an urge which is as natural as hunger, and as impossible wholly to "conquer"

Where Love Comes In

You may have been wondering why, with all this talk about sex, nothing has been said about love. Dynamic psychology neither maintains that sex and love are independent of or different from each other, nor says love is "nothing but" sex. Actually one develops *pari passu* with the other. Since life is a quest of pleasure you inevitably are drawn to (i.e. love) the person from whom you expect to get it. But in turn, as sex develops from purely self-centred pleasure to delights that multiply by being shared, love also becomes mutual and altruistic, and in marriage the two personalities are fused in a shared happiness which carries into all of life's activities the oneness of a perfect sexual union.

To call love "nothing but" sex is obviously foolish. You can say, for instance, that when Jascha Heifetz plays the violin, the music consists of sounds produced by scraping the intestines of a sheep with hair from a horse's tail. But if you say it is "nothing but" that, you are talking nonsense. For one thing, the same note played by Mr. Heifetz has recognizably different overtones from what it would have if played by another violinist, and it is these that give each performer—and each different instrument—its special timbre and appeal.

The more civilized and mature any person becomes, the more

overtones his ways of finding pleasure acquire, and this is supremely true of the sexual pleasures of cultivated men and women who love each other—the Brownings, for instance. And yet just as there would be no music without the sheep gut and horsehair, so I am convinced that there can be no real love without sex, even between people whose sexual intimacies go no further than a warm glance or a handshake. And if sex provides life's most intense immediate pleasure, love is the source of the supreme and most enduring happiness a man or a woman can know.

Why so many of us fall so far short of attaining true love or enduring happiness I shall try to show in the next chapter

CHAPTER IV

SHALL YOUR CONSCIENCE BE YOUR GUIDE?

MUCH THE LARGEST FACTOR in deciding both how happy you will be and how much real maturity you will achieve is the kind of conscience you grew up with. If you have a conscience that is flexible and realistic—that will leave you free to find ways to obtain the satisfactions you want, and enjoy them after you have got them—you are pretty sure to find life interesting and worth living. But if, like Mark Twain, you could say, "I have a conscience that tears me like a wild beast," or if your ideals are satisfied with nothing short of absolute moral perfection, you will certainly be miserable and frustrated. At the same time, if you have no conscience at all—like the strange people known as psychopaths or moral imbeciles—you may enjoy life without inner conflicts, but you probably will wind up in jail or a mental institution.

The old idea that each of us has an inborn capacity to distinguish good from evil and that all we need do is to follow this "still, small voice" within us, has been pretty thoroughly exploded by dynamic psychology. To start with, morality as such is what biologists call an acquired characteristic and therefore is not transmitted by inheritance. So far as his sense of right and wrong is concerned, the new baby is no different from *Pithecanthropus erectus*, and it takes him years to acquire even the most elementary principles of adult morals. The "crimes" (from an adult standard) of which a small child is capable are restricted only by his physical and intellectual limitations, and may easily include what in a grown-up would be murder. I once knew a "sweet and loving" little girl of four who tried to get her baby brother out of the way by deliberately pushing him down a staircase, yet this child was in no way abnormal and grew up to be a very kind and gentle person.

Sociology and history further inform us that there is almost no act but parricide and parent-child incest which has not been done with a clear conscience by some group of people at

some place or period of time. The thugs and dacoits of India regarded robbery and murder as religious obligations, at least where their enemies were concerned, and all sorts of sexual practices, both natural and perverse, have been sanctioned as acts of devotion—for example, in the rites of Bacchus. So how trustworthy a guide your conscience is in helping you distinguish right from wrong depends neither on inheritance nor on instinct; it is wholly a matter of the way in which you happened to be brought up.

Where Your "Moral Instincts" Came From

Here is how your supposed "moral instincts" actually were developed. From the day you were born, every time anyone scolded or punished you, an "association" of pain and fear was set up in your mind. But, unfortunately, this association was not with the act or attitude for which your parents or nurse *meant* to discipline you; it was with what you *thought* they meant, which may have been quite different. And the earlier the "tie-in" took place, the stronger the fear association was and the harder it will be to root out as long as you live. For example, a small child punished for soiling himself may easily develop the idea that the offence which had such painful consequences was the act of moving his bowels, not his having done so at the wrong time. And this false impression may become the nucleus around which a lifelong habit of constipation will develop. Indeed, the idea that constipation is primarily a neurosis in most cases is now pretty generally accepted, even by non-psychiatric doctors.

As we grow older, our various childish fear associations crystallize in the form of a sense of guilt which automatically is aroused by certain actions or emotions; and to some extent everyone's life is and remains a battle between guilt and natural desires. When our sense of guilt or "conscience" (the two are essentially the same) won't let us satisfy our desires, these either find other outlets through some form of sublimation,¹ or remain frustrated, with the psychic energy behind them turning into what is called aggression. When desire outweighs conscience, the guilt which attempted to inhibit the forbidden action is not destroyed, but is stored up in the mind as part of the reservoir of "infantile guilt" or "free-floating anxiety," to be released

¹ See Chapter V.

whenever an opportunity arises. For instance, analysis would probably reveal the fact that you are still suffering psychologically from the guilt aroused the day you spent the nickel Mother gave you for the Sunday-school collection to buy an ice-cream cone. Unconscious release of childish guilt may take the form of exaggerated remorse over relatively harmless offences, or simply create a vague mood of depression and uneasiness for which you can give no reasonable basis. The moods that are known colloquially as "the blues," "the jitters," or "the heeby-jeebies," are examples of this process.

Conscience only a Façade

The elaborate and seemingly rational moral sense or conscience of adult life is thus no more than the façade of a mass of childish fear associations which create in most of us two general impressions, first, that we are somehow not the sort of men or women that we should be; second, that we ought to conform to an ideal which is actually much less specific and more exacting than we realize. The sum of these two impressions comes to constitute a powerful factor in our mental and emotional life to which Freud gave the name of Super-Ego because, figuratively speaking, it stands "over" the selves (egos) of which we are conscious and attempts to mould these into its pattern.

A good illustration of the way in which the Super-Ego is developed is a family anecdote that used to be told about me when I was perhaps two years old. Our living-room had a fireplace which was seldom used, and from a baby's standpoint made an ideal playhouse; but since it was usually draughty and quite often dirty, I had been strictly forbidden to use it for that purpose. One day when I was alone in the room someone passing the door heard me say to myself: "If I go play in the fireplace, Mother won't like it." Through a crack, the observer saw me stand a moment, shrug my shoulders, and walk away toward the other side of the room.

It was *the imagined presence of my mother* which not only kept me from one of my favourite diversions, but eventually made me feel in my own mind that playing in the fireplace was "naughty." Of course, as I grew older, even though I ceased to put the feeling into words, there were a thousand impulses that I rejected

every day, as other children do, out of the feeling that "Mother won't like it." This reaction, which ends by becoming automatic and unconscious, explains why Freud calls the Super-Ego "an introjected parent image"—actually a composite image of both parents and, to some extent, of other figures which assume authority over our lives in childhood. And this image, even though the people it first represented may have been long since dead, remains an ineradicable factor in our feelings and behaviour all our lives long.

The most dangerous thing about the Super-Ego (of which, as I have said, conscience is at most a superficial manifestation) is that it is older in each person's history than his reasoning powers or his understanding of the nature of the world he has to live in. It is therefore inaccessible to reason or common sense, but remains—and keeps us—more or less emotionally childish all our lives long.

What Kind of Parents had You?

But because the Super-Ego is a parent image, the severity of any person's conscience depends mainly on the sort of parents he had, and especially on how morally exacting they were. I recall a conversation in my college days in which I said to a classmate that I wasn't sure what was the right thing to do in a certain situation. He answered, quite seriously: "Why, that's easy. All you have to do is think what you *dislike* most and that is the right thing for you." Poor Dick's father was the sort of person who, as the result of his own morbid conscience, was afraid of all things pleasurable either for himself or for his children, and had saddled his son with the same handicap—which I know him well enough to think he still has, forty years later.

As I have said, so far as your Super-Ego is concerned, what your "reason" tells you has little or no effect on your emotional reactions. A bright young Jewish woman in her early thirties began her psychoanalytic interview one day by announcing that she had a terrible attack of indigestion. When I asked what she thought had caused the trouble, she said "I know only too well—I've been eating shrimps again."

"Were they bad shrimps?" I inquired.

"Oh no," was the answer; "they were very good shrimp."

In fact, they were utterly delicious, but I cannot eat shrimps without getting sick, and yet every now and then I simply have to have them because I love them so much "

I was puzzled for a moment, but then an idea struck me. "Are shrimps *kosher*?" I asked

"Certainly not," said my patient "But I gave up paying any attention to that nonsense when I left home fifteen years ago."

"Maybe you did," I said, "but apparently your Super-Ego didn't " And discussion of the problem disclosed the fact that shrimps had become a symbol of all the restrictions which Miss K's orthodox father had imposed upon her. Thus eating them meant defying his authority and risking—in fact, inflicting on herself—the punishment he would have given her for such defiance. Once she realized this, Miss K. was able to eat shrimps without difficulty, but lost her compulsive interest in them. I have told this story several times to Jewish audiences and in nearly every case someone has told me afterward of a similar experience of his or her own

What a Sense of Guilt can Do

The sense of guilt aroused by a violation of the Super-Ego's orders may, however, produce much more serious results than indigestion. A young man whom I will call Michael F. had been brought up a devout Roman Catholic and when quite young married a girl of his own faith whom he later found more sexually inhibited than he could bear. Since neither of them realized that this condition can be cured, he obtained a divorce, and in time married a normal and healthy-minded girl, with whom for some years he appeared happy. Then one day his wife told him that she was pregnant, and while at first he could not see why this should be such a shock, as he later told me, he eventually realized he could not bear the thought of being the father of a child by a girl to whom his religion—or, in other words, his Super-Ego—told him that he was not really married

During his wife's pregnancy, Michael began drinking heavily, and on the night of his little daughter's birth he disappeared, and did not come home until the next day. He drank more and more from then on, winding up by trying to kill both his wife

and the baby, and eventually she had to divorce him. When I last heard from him he not only had become a chronic alcoholic of the *Lost Week-end* variety, but was showing signs of mental illness which I fear is more apt to get worse than better. I do not say Michael's need to drown his sense of guilt over his daughter's birth was the sole cause of his difficulties—among other things, I am sure that jealousy at having to share his wife with the baby was also a factor in his problem—but his Super-Ego was what really “drove him crazy,” and the same is true of many, if not most of the unfortunate men and women who become what we call “insane”

Moral Confusion

But the Super-Ego can not only make acts which are more or less blameworthy seem much worse than they are; it can warp our moral standards to the point where serious offences against the accepted *mores* appear trivial, while quite unimportant things seem hideously shameful to us. James C., a male patient of mine, had admitted with comparatively little difficulty a wide range of sexually perverse habits, but one day I could see from his manner that he was trying to screw up courage to make a confession which was almost too hard for him. After writhing on the analytic couch as if in anguish, he finally burst out: “Oh well, I suppose I might as well get this out of my system. when I was a boy I used to *pick my nose!*”

Could anything show more clearly that the average person's conscience is by nature childish and reacts most strongly to what seemed to incur the severest disapproval of his parents? Because James C's parents never had discussed sex with him, the mass of his vague but intense sense of guilt at bodily self-indulgence had been concentrated on nose-picking, and left him free to enjoy things which his parents probably had never heard of with no conscious qualms whatever. And while his was an extreme case, the effect of conscience on all of us is, as I have said, to keep us childish, at least in our deeper feelings.

For that matter, since there's nothing which the average child thinks more strictly forbidden than to usurp the privileges of adulthood—especially that of making his own moral decisions—the more powerful and rigid anyone's conscience is, the less

able he is to decide anything for himself except on the basis of the rules laid down by someone in authority who has unconsciously replaced the parents he no longer can appeal to. And, of course, it is the fear of losing the support of such authority that makes people frightened and hysterically angry when their "moral principles"—that is, the dictates of their parent substitutes—are questioned. Again, there is the emotional disorder known as "separation anxiety" which is not uncommon among men who are obliged to leave the military service after years of the comforting moral support that military discipline, with its freedom from personal responsibility, provides. I have seen several men whose minds appeared quite normal as long as they stayed in uniform, but who became violently insane when called upon to face the demand for personal initiative which civilian life imposed upon them.

Wishing as "Wicked" as Doing

Even so, life would be fairly simple if one's conscience operated only in relation to his actions. But unfortunately one can feel as guilty over *wanting* to do things which he has been taught to think wrong as if he had actually done them. For, as children, we all feel our wishes have a magic power to bring about their own fulfilment, and few of us wholly outgrow this impression. Consequently, wanting something, even in adult life, often is unconsciously equivalent to having done or caused it. Think, for instance, of how strong a feeling of irrational guilt people may have when someone whom they have wished to have die actually does so, even though there was no actual connection between wish and event. Again, a man like the Rev. John G., whom I spoke of in an earlier chapter, would have had to admit that he had never in his life *done* anything really wicked—it was his "sinful desires and feelings" that caused him so much pain. A monk who was once my patient told me that the most intense manifestations of a sense of guilt which he had ever seen were those of two brothers in the monastery who seldom left their cells and were regarded by the other monks as candidates for sainthood.

Worse still, the displeasure of the Super-Ego can be incurred by desires which have been so completely repressed that the

person does not even know he has them. A young woman I know suffered all the symptoms of intense guilt and self-loathing—leading her not only to be pathologically sensitive, but to develop a severe “anxiety neurosis”—over her unconscious hatred of a domineering mother to whom she and everybody else believed she was “devoted.” The shock of discovering her real feelings nearly threw her off her mental balance altogether, but eventually she learned to accept her attitude as natural in the circumstances and ceased hating herself for it. The final extreme to which guilt can go on a totally unconscious basis is that of the mental illness popularly known as melancholia, victims of which not infrequently spend all their waking hours in weeping over much exaggerated or imaginary “sins” which they believe they have committed.

Nature Fights Back

But the Super-Ego does not have things all its own way, even in fanatically conscientious people. Dynamic psychology sees the mind as consisting of three elements: Super-Ego, Ego, and *Id*, and our mental processes as made up of the interplay among them. “Ego” is the conscious self, consisting not only of the thoughts and feelings that we are aware of, but of our *idea* of ourselves, both as we are and as we think we should be. Under and behind both Ego and Super-Ego is the *Id*—the reservoir of unconscious drives and instincts which supply the motive power of our existence. The name *Id* is the Latin form of it, the neuter pronoun, and is given because the *Id* is impersonal, unchangeable, and universal. It is the same in all people of both sexes and of every type of race or culture, and its single aim is the blind search for pleasure under any circumstances and at all costs. It is common nowadays to speak of someone’s suffering from “inner conflict,” though most people do not realize that such conflicts are in your unconscious and that a conscious “struggle with temptation” gives only a superficial picture of the issues actually involved. Joe M. saw his life as a perpetual battle between the desire to get drunk and “forget his troubles” and an honest wish to be a good husband and father and win the respect of his friends. But when Joe did get drunk he was likely to go home and beat his wife—in fact, he

once nearly killed her—and a bit of mental probing soon uncovered the fact that his real conflict was between his desire for his wife's approval and his wish to punish her for being sexually unresponsive—beneath which again was the repressed memory of a similarly based conflict between love and hatred of his mother.

The opposing forces in our inner conflicts are always the Super-Ego and the Id, and only someone who has seen beneath the surface of the mind can realize how bitter these conflicts can be. For the Id is indestructible, and only fights back harder the more mercilessly it is attacked by the Super-Ego. In fact, it is probably the rage aroused in the Id by the attempts of the Super-Ego to frustrate its quest for satisfaction that is at the root of most of the aggressiveness we see in human nature. As one all too frequent instance, this aggressiveness may be directed at some person, or some racial or religious group which we adopt as an unconscious substitute for our restrictive parents, and yet are free to attack because they are sufficiently different from our parents so that we can deceive ourselves as to their actual meaning for us. To the average German, "the Jew" may well have become a symbol of the tyrannizing father he did not dare admit he hated, but whose role he could usurp—as he had always wanted to do—in relation to a weaker person who was at his mercy. Indeed, something like this is the basic cause of racial and religious bias generally.

The Id's fury against its oppressor may take the form of hostility toward people of whom we are really jealous because they enjoy the pleasures in which we dare not indulge. The average "strait-laced" person's attitude toward sin is the classic illustration of this. But the "sinners" in turn may be moved to unreasonable hatred of those who represent to them a Super-Ego they have not at heart succeeded in outgrowing as effectively as they believe. Anyone who had a Puritan upbringing and thinks he has got over its effects may betray the fact that he has not quite done so by denouncing people who embody the ideas he has abandoned as Pharisees, hypocrites, and whited sepulchres. I have much respect for Mr. Philip Wylie, but I cannot echo him in calling even my most painfully virtuous neighbours "a generation of vipers." What most of us really are, emotionally, is frightened children trying desperately to

convince ourselves and other people that we do not actually feel the impulses and urges which we are finding it harder and harder to conceal, but for giving way to which we still fear we shall be punished.

Atonement

Perhaps the least recognized yet most important result of a sense of guilt, whatever it is based on, is the need to *punish oneself* by way of atonement. The cycle of which this need is a part goes back to the child's experience of (a) having incurred a parent's displeasure and feeling a devastating sense of alienation from the person whom he knows his life depends on; (b) being punished for his naughtiness, and (c) at last being restored to favour. Unconsciously following this pattern, a child or an adult who feels he has done wrong is likely to suffer a most painful sense of insecurity until the punishment or suffering arrives, and will often ease the strain by either provoking the punishment (for instance, by confession) in order to "get it over," or deliberately inflicting it on himself. For that reason, it is psychologically unsound not to punish a child who has disobeyed you, since he is quite apt to bring a worse suffering upon himself than you would have inflicted on him. Worse still, the fact that reconciliation follows punishment may lead the child to gain the impression that his parents like to see him suffer, and that the best way to win their love is to make himself miserable. And in many cases this impression later is transferred from parents to the Deity, who to many people is a Being whose favour is best won by some sort of self-inflicted suffering or privation. We may see this idea manifested in a thousand forms, from the Hindu fakir on his bed of nails, or the monk in his hair shirt, to the Puritan who seeks to win God's favour by not kissing his wife on the Sabbath.

Another entirely unrealistic effect of this cycle of guilt, suffering, and reconciliation is the all too common feeling that once one has paid off his debt by remorse or self-humiliation he is free to go out and incur another. Repentance and "penance" are apt to involve a sort of "deal" between the Id and the Super-Ego, under which indulgences which otherwise would be forbidden are permissible so long as they are paid for with pain. Anyone who has had much to do with alcoholics knows,

for instance, that the more remorseful one of them is in the throes of a hangover, and the harsher names he calls himself, the sooner you may expect him to "fall off the wagon." In fact, there is reason to believe that much of the suffering of the average hangover is a form of unconscious self-punishment—so much so that it has been my experience that people who do not feel guilty over drinking seldom have hangovers at all. The sort of "deal" that I spoke of is even more strikingly shown in the case of some of the perversions, which the person often cannot let himself indulge in except under circumstances that involve his suffering for them. I know a male homosexual, for instance, who will never make advances except to a total stranger, with the result that he is more often beaten up than gratified in his desires, and I feel sure that the risks he runs are what make his behaviour possible, and that he might be entirely inhibited if he could find no way to incur them.

Worry is Self-punishment

The most common of all forms of unconscious self-punishment is, of course, what we call "worry," which is psychologically always based on an unconscious or a semi-conscious sense that we "deserve" to have something shameful happen to us, but that this may perhaps be averted by making ourselves miserable beforehand. I knew a young woman, for example, who was having an "illicit" love affair and told me she had the feeling that the best way to prevent her period from being late—with the appalling implications that that would carry—was to "worry about it" for several days beforehand, while if she should forget and fail to worry, she would almost surely find herself in difficulties.

Naturally, I am not discussing forethought, or provision for the future, even in the sense of trying to foresee the difficulties by which we may be confronted. The worry I speak of is a misuse of imagination to paint pictures of the future which are frightening or painful, even though we know quite well in theory that doing so has no effect on the actual situation. A wife, for example, who lies awake picturing her absent husband meeting his death in a plane crash certainly is doing nothing to keep the plane flying, and unless she is unconsciously expressing a

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repressed wish (and torturing herself for the guilt which the wish carries with it) she is doubtless punishing herself for some other offence and thereby, she believes, averting the retribution which she feels is due her.

Conscience "on the rampage"—or, more accurately, the self-punishing drive of a too active Super-Ego—is the real cause of more human misery than can be catalogued in any single volume. An only too incomplete list of the maladies which may be attributed to it might include—

Sexual frigidity or impotence, both in marriage and outside it, along with all sexual perversion

Most divorce and marital unhappiness.

Most if not all psychoneurosis and a large share of psychosis, popularly called "insanity."

The various forms of illness called "psychosomatic"—for example, gastric ulcer.

Suicide—the ultimate self-punishment—as well as the various form of what Dr. Karl A. Menninger calls "partial suicide": self-mutilation, alcoholism and drug addiction; social and moral defeatism; unconsciously self-inflicted accidents, and a considerable share of all crimes. For as Dr. Frank Alexander and the late Dr. Hugo Staub (a practising attorney who was also a distinguished psychoanalyst) point out in *The Criminal, the Judge and the Public*, the real motive behind many criminal offences is not any benefit the person hopes to derive from them; it is an unconscious attempt to get himself punished for a secret sin which is still "on his conscience."

Is Conscience an Enemy?

Does all this mean that your conscience is more of an enemy than a friend and that you would, on the whole, be better off without it?

No. In the imperfect world that we grew up in, few of us could safely follow all our natural impulses and trust common sense to keep us out of trouble. Our urges are too strong and react too quickly for that. Many, if not most of us, might commit murder if our tempers had no "brakes" except our realizing that, for instance, killing the girl who has double-crossed us will not give us back the love we have lost. As an automobile

driver or the pilot of a plane must be able to react *automatically* in a crisis, we need automatic inhibitions against impulses that would be dangerous or deadly, even though these inhibitions may themselves be harmful in the long run if not subject to control by reason

Again, as I said in the beginning of this chapter, it is possible to have a conscience that is "flexible and realistic" and that steers rather than stops our quest of pleasure. Whether this is so depends upon our parents and the means they used in teaching us to fit into the pattern of accepted civilized behaviour. If they taught us to be "good" mainly to please them and win their approval, we shall have the kind of conscience which will be a generally safe guide, whereas, if our assumed virtues are based mainly on the fear of being punished, we shall have a conscience that will ruin our lives if we let it.

For just as our parents' disapproval is embodied in our minds as self-doubt and a chronic sense of guilt, their deserved praise inspires self-respect and honourable pride, the soundest of all incentives for desirable behaviour. If you give up something because you are afraid to try to get it, you will at heart always want it and resent being deprived of it, thus creating in your mind a never-ending conflict. But if you willingly give up something which you would have liked in order to get something else you like still better, the self-denial will not hurt you. That is why I have long admired the Confucian code of morals which appeals to the idea of becoming a "superior person," not to gaining favour or avoiding punishment from some supernatural power.

Toward a New Morality

Whether there are actions or emotions that are absolutely "good" or "bad" I don't know, and I strongly doubt whether anybody else does, but out of man's long experience it should be possible to realize what sort of actions will "work" and which will not—which will or will not promote the general happiness of mankind. And on this sort of purely pragmatic basis we may gradually build the new morality the world so obviously is in need of. To try to describe this would take a whole book in itself, but I will venture one suggestion: since we have seen that

the basis of all happiness is "insight," which in turn requires knowledge of reality, the distortion or suppression of facts will be the supreme offence under our new code. We shall pity the poor girl who sells her body, but regard as an enemy of society the man who sells his mind and abilities to mislead his neighbours.

What You can Do

Do you have a "guilty conscience?"

Probably, and quite regardless of whether or not you have done anything you would consider wrong from an adult standpoint. Just as probably you are unconscious of your sense of guilt or are but vaguely conscious of it and quite unaware of its real basis. For a sense of guilt that is too painful may be repressed just as sternly as a wish or feeling shame forbids you to face. Indeed, among modern-minded people who have "rationalized" themselves into doing what their Super-Ego still forbids, repressed guilt causes as much trouble as repressed desires. If you're worried and uneasy for no reason you can think of, have no confidence in yourself, or act like your own worst enemy, it is because at heart you feel guilty and dare not admit it because that would break down your defences. But what can you do about it?

In the first place, since a sense of guilt grows out of "fear associations," you can build up what I call "counter-associations" that will more or less outweigh them. Whatever success the average married couple has in reaching sexual adjustment comes from having found by repeated experience that they can do what they were taught to regard as sinful without actually being punished for it. How well this will work depends on the strength of the fear associations. I know many married pairs who cannot enjoy making love unless they are "a bit tight"—that is, unless they have put their sex guilt to sleep with liquor—and others who are never able to enjoy it. In fact, if your sense of guilt is strong enough, doing the things that it makes you afraid of will do more harm than good.

Gleams of insight may occasionally penetrate the armour of your fears, but trying to reason yourself out of them will seldom help much—the fears go too far back and were too firmly entrenched in your mind before you were capable of logic for

it to have any effect on them. If the "introjected parent image" which has grown into your Super-Ego is too harsh a tyrant, you must find some sort of "parent substitute" who will be more indulgent. Society as a whole will often serve this purpose, as, for instance, if you learn that "everybody does" what you feel guilty about doing (in this respect alone the Kinsey Report may be of enormous value). Or some individual you trust may become to your emotions the mother or father who says "you may" where your actual parent said "you must not" (This book is intended to do just that for you if you'll let it.) But if none of these things lifts the load of guilt you carry, nowadays there is the last resort of psychiatric treatment—best of all, psychoanalysis. For here you will find a "parent" who has no desire to see you bound by any rules except those of reality and your own nature, and will ultimately free you to seek in your own way the maturity and happiness you have it in you to find.

CHAPTER V

YOUR FAULTS CAN BE ASSETS

HOWEVER EFFECTIVELY YOU MAY have been able to revise your childish false impressions and undo their effects on your conscience, you will probably still be aware of desires or habits you wish that you did not have because they make you unhappy or cause trouble for you. You call these your "faults" or "weaknesses" and have tried to get the better of them, but have had no great or lasting success. Does this mean that you must think of them as permanent liabilities which you can only accept and make the best of, or has dynamic psychology discovered something you can do about them which works better than will power or good resolutions?

You certainly need not give up and say, "Oh well, that's the sort of person I am!" if you do not want to. On the contrary, these faults of yours—or most of them—not only need not forever remain on the "red" side of your mental ledger, you can turn them into assets, if you learn how.

If it's real faults that make you unhappy, not the way your childish Super-Ego tells you that you *ought* to feel about things which are really harmless, the first step you should take is to see just what a fault is. The word comes from a root which meant originally to "fool" or deceive, and faults really are examples of unconscious self-deception. They are ways of trying to get satisfactions which you can't help wanting by means which do not work, everything considered. This much at least has been recognized much longer than you may imagine; the Hebrew and Greek words which are commonly translated "sin" in the Bible both applied originally to a bowman who *missed his mark*, with no necessary implication that he deserved to be punished for his poor aim.

By now we know that the target of all action is some kind of pleasure, and the energy behind the bowstring is the Pleasure Principle or Id. The name technically given to the force or

drive which the Id generates is the Latin word *libido*, and from the first squirming of the newborn baby toward the mysterious something he will come in time to recognize as Mother's breast, every activity of life is an expression of this same force.

We all want the same things

What is more, dynamic psychology has learned that the *libido* is exactly the same in all human beings. Fundamentally all of us, male or female, "saint" or "sinner," want the same things and differ from one another only in the methods by which we attempt to get them. The desire for power (as an expression of or substitute for sexual potency) that made one man a Hitler is the same as the urge which sent Abraham Lincoln from a log cabin to the White House; just as the same craving for "mouth pleasure" that makes one man a chain-smoker may evolve another into a gourmet.

But while we all want the same things—or, more accurately, the same kinds of pleasure—there is infinite variety in the intensity with which we may crave one or another of them, and this is what makes human personalities differ from each other and gives them "individuality." A good parallel is that of the variety in human faces. Mr. Winston Churchill and President Truman, for example, both have eyes, a mouth, a nose, a chin, and so on, yet these differ enough in their relative proportions so that we say the two men "don't look at all alike." In the same way, every normal person prefers ease and luxury to discomfort, but there is a lot of difference between the importance a good dinner and a cognac have for one man and the relatively small place such things may have in the interest of another.

What you call your faults are partly the expression of the relative importance certain aims or satisfactions have come to have for you. But also, and still more, they express your fixed determination to achieve these in a certain manner which you came in childhood to feel was the only way to get them. And that, as a rule, is where the "self-deception" comes in. One of the most obvious illustrations of this is the way in which a normal craving like the wish to be admired may become fixed—or "fixated"—on a childish level which makes it obnoxious

in adult life. This urge, which is technically known as exhibitionism, may retain the purely childish form of a compelling impulse to display one's sexual organs, and this sexual "perversion," so-called, is by no means limited to otherwise ignorant and stupid people. On the other hand, the exhibitionistic impulse may partially mature into incessant showing off or boasting, rendering the person slightly less objectionable to his neighbours, but still something of a social menace. Or with the urge still "fixated" on this level, the fear and shame that have come to be associated with it through parental scoldings may result in its repression, so that one's whole social life is crippled by unnatural shyness. For shy people are essentially repressed exhibitionists—they would not be so painfully afraid of making an unfavourable impression if they did not wish so desperately to create a good one. Just about the shyest person I know is a young woman librarian with the sort of personality we commonly call mouse-like, and yet in her dreams she is almost invariably a *prima donna* or a *première danseuse*. And, of course, the common nightmare of finding yourself naked in the middle of Times Square expresses the exhibitionist impulse in its primary form.

"Sublimation"

But there is a way to gratify this impulse which is not obnoxious or disgusting; in fact, it gives pleasure and not pain to others and will actually lead them to reward you in more tangible ways than with the admiration you began by wanting. The process of finding such a better way of getting what you want is known as "sublimation," and consists essentially in finding an *emotional equivalent* of the original forbidden satisfaction that is socially acceptable and pleasure-giving. In the case of exhibitionism, the obvious illustration is, of course, the actor, and in so far as public approval can be estimated by financial rewards, anyone who has learned how to sublimate his exhibitionism in this way can be said to rate near the top of the list of public favourites. But numerous other occupations have wholly or partially the same motivation. I doubt whether any man would wish to be a preacher or a lecturer, for instance, who was not at least a little of an exhibitionist at heart, and the same may be

said about teachers, models, and whoever needs and finds *an audience* for his achievements.

The main point in sublimation is that it permits you to release for personally and socially productive ends a mass of psychic energy (*libido*) which would be blocked or used up in inner conflicts if it had remained fixed in its primitive forms of expression. And, of course, it is this *energy potential* that I had in mind in saying that a fault can be an asset. For nothing is surer than that few of us are ever able to release for use to our own or to anyone's advantage more than a small fraction of the energy our minds and bodies generate. And the reason for this is not merely "inhibition" it is that our energies are wasted in an endless battle between the attempt to seek what we instinctively want and the effort to restrain ourselves from doing what we feel other people (or our consciences) will disapprove of. Call a truce or armistice in this war, enlist both opposing armies under the one banner of the quest for happiness, and you'll be amazed at the resources you will find you have at your disposal.

Aggression

What we usually call "aggressiveness" may be either one of the worst faults or one of the most useful qualities a human being can have. A perennial subject of debate in psychiatric circles turns on whether aggressiveness (or, as it is oftener called, "aggression") is or is not an inherent element in human nature. But this is an academic problem. One fact which is universally admitted is that the frustration of our desires leads inevitably to aggression, and since no one possibly can grow up without meeting some frustration, the aggressive element is actually found in every human being, and each of us has to find some way of dealing with it.

But, like other faults, aggression can be sublimated, sometimes in a way which involves merely finding the right outlet for it. Joe Louis, for instance, may not have done anything with his aggressive impulses but learn to submit them to the rules of the prize-ring, yet he has amassed a fortune in that way. A slightly more subtle sublimation of aggression is that of the football champion or the winner of various other forms of athletic contests, all of which are really sublimated battles.

When we come to the case of actual battles, we find a more complex problem, since the average soldier was so forcibly conditioned to repress aggressive impulses—at least in their primitive form—that he found himself unable to release them, even on the enemy, without suffering severe qualms of conscience. There could hardly be a better illustration of how lasting the effect of early moral training is than the fact that the average American young man cannot kill even a person who is trying to kill him without feeling guilty, often to the point of “nervous breakdown.” I imagine the late William James, although he did not know the word, was looking for a sublimation of aggression when he urged mankind to find a “moral equivalent of war.” And of course, such an equivalent has been found by whole generations of “crusaders,” sometimes to mankind’s advantage and sometimes not.

The form of aggression which we call bad temper may also be useful if we can learn to control it and to use it only on the right occasions. The late Mayor LaGuardia of New York was notorious for his temper tantrums, but people who knew him were inclined to think these were much less spontaneous or uncontrolled than they looked; they were planned and staged to produce a definite effect which sometimes could not be gained by other methods. I remember years ago asking a master plumber on what basis he would decide which of several appointments to keep, and his answer was: “The one with the fellow who will make the most fuss if I disappoint him.” For practical purposes in an imperfect world, there is a great deal of truth in the old maxim, “The wheel that squeaks gets the grease,” and if you are a person who knows how to squeak—or “squawk”—at the right time and in the right place, you have a real asset in that knowledge.

Curiosity

Curiosity is often treated as a fault or vice in children, especially when it’s directed toward sex, and too great inquisitiveness about other people’s private affairs is a most unamiable failing in an adult. But the bulk of the world’s progress has been brought about by men and women who had an insatiable desire to know what was going on around them and what caused it. Not only has curiosity produced all we know as science, sexual curiosity

has more or less unconsciously inspired discoveries in anatomy, physiology, sociology, and, above all, psychology. Men such as Westermarck, Freud, and Havelock Ellis all undoubtedly had elements of the "Peeping Tom" in their natures, and a psychoanalyst can hardly help but to be to some degree a *voyeur*.

"Self-indulgence"

"Self-indulgence" is generally regarded as a fault. It really is so only in the case of people who not only never learned to sublimate it, but still practise it in forms which have the characteristically childish quality of lack of perspective. To indulge yourself to-day in ways which will mean suffering to-morrow obviously is not so much wrong as it is stupid; although doubtless behind the stupidity is a more or less unconscious fear that if you do not grasp a maximum of pleasure right now you may never have another chance to get it. But the man or woman who has learned to be intelligently self-indulgent not only enjoys life but helps make it more enjoyable for others. After all, "good taste" is mainly intelligent self-indulgence, since it involves the selection of those objects or gratifications which will give us the most and most subtle pleasure over the longest period of time. The French, for example, make a sharp distinction between the *gourmet*, who eats intelligently and regards the preparation of food as an art, and the *gourmand*, who wants all the food he can get and regards its quality as secondary. I cannot see that it is less self-indulgent to enjoy a symphony concert than to get your thrill from a jam session, but I do believe that the great difference between Beethoven and Duke Ellington is the number of times you can hear the Fifth Symphony, for instance, and still see new beauties and new meanings in it, while once you have heard a boogie-woogie record half a dozen times it has no more to give you.

✓ Laziness

The parallel vice or fault of laziness is a whole topic in itself. In one sense you might say that there is no such thing—certainly no able-bodied person would be apt to be "too lazy" to walk more than "a mile" if he knew there was a thousand dollars

waiting for him at his destination. A great deal of seeming laziness is really because of failure to believe that there is anything to walk for. A child, for example, whose attempts to gratify his wishes by his own efforts have been consistently thwarted may acquire and carry on into adult life the impression that "there's no use trying" to get anything worth having, and be classed as lazy for that reason. On the other hand, a child who always has been given what he wanted without effort may see the demand that he now work for what he wants as evidence that no one loves him any longer, and refuse to work out of resentment or hurt feelings. For example, I had several patients who were "on relief" during the great depression of the early 1930s, and some of them finally confessed that they preferred that situation to having a paid job which doubled or tripled their income. The unconscious reason they uncovered was that being supported by the Government gave them a sense of someone "caring" whether or not they went hungry—of having a "higher power" to depend on—which revived the happy days of childhood. And some of these people still admit that though they live more comfortably, they are not so happy as they were in the "good old W P A days."

On the other hand, what looks like laziness may be the product of unconscious feelings of guilt. Wilbur H. spent years in gathering material for a book which he regarded as his life-work and yet always found himself unable (or, as he believed, "too lazy") to get started putting it on paper. As surely as he would sit down to begin the first chapter, a business appointment would come up, he would receive a social invitation too attractive to refuse, or he would find that he was "just too tired to think clearly." The real reason for his difficulty proved to be that the book represented an attempt to refute certain basic ideas of his father's—especially on the subject of religion—and thus, so far as the would-be author's feelings were concerned, involved impiety and disobedience. Incidentally, at the time I speak of, Wilbur was well on into his forties, and his father had been dead for some fifteen years, but that did not lessen the son's fear of his displeasure. For no one whom we have truly loved or feared (or both) can ever die so far as our unconscious minds are concerned.

If you think—or fear—that you are lazy, first remember that

in itself what the psychiatrists call "economy of effort" is not a vice, but a virtue, since no reasonable person will expend more effort, mentally or physically, than is necessary to accomplish what he's trying to do. The best definition of efficiency I have heard is "intelligent laziness." The attempt to avoid unnecessary effort has not only led to numberless useful inventions; it has made it possible to get far more done and to achieve far more pleasure in an ordinary lifetime than was possible in horse-and-buggy days. Whether the number and size of to-day's books are an unmixed boon to mankind might possibly be debated, but assuredly there could be no "best-sellers," even in the field of education or of self-help, if such labour-saving machines as the typewriter, the linotype, and the power press had never been invented.

Insincerity

Insincerity is perhaps the most detestable of vices in its crude form, and yet it, too, is a characteristic which can be valuable if made proper use of. For while the immediate aim of being insincere is to create a false impression, underneath that there is still the basically harmless urge to please your hearers, and make them regard you and what you say favourably. Sublimated, this urge may become tact, which not only is the necessary oil that lubricates the social machinery, but is an essential element in the communication of ideas from one person to another. We must not forget that, as Thoreau said. "It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak, and another to hear," and if you first close your hearer's ears by needless "frankness" you have made him deaf to anything you want to tell him.

Day-dreaming

Day-dreaming instead of acting can be a more serious fault than most of those we have mentioned. Perhaps the most dangerous discovery which we make as children is that it is possible to use imagination to make up for the accomplishments or pleasures we have not been able to attain in real life. For while every child inevitably does this and most children are weaned from it as they become able to get what they want by their own efforts, the way of escape through day-dreams never is

entirely closed for anybody, and the more impossible life's problems come to appear, the greater the risk that anyone may be driven to withdraw into a "private world" of his own making "Insanity" is basically nothing but this, except that now the day-dreamer has ceased to know what he is doing. And again "unconscious fantasies," the day-dreams that never quite reach the surface of our minds are the chaff with which neurotics chiefly try to satisfy their normal hungers and which may dull the pains of frustration just enough to keep them going.

But like other faculties which may be dangerous, imagination may also be of enormous value. Most discoveries and inventions began in imagination, and so does most true art. The artist, in fact, is a day-dreamer who has learned to make his dreams work for him—his productions represent primarily a way of gratifying in imagination his own frustrated and frequently unconscious wish for power or pleasure—or maybe for revenge. But by having learned to share his dreams and to communicate his satisfactions to those who are less adept than he at dreaming, he may, if he is successful, make his dreams come true in real life and attain the power or pleasure he originally only dreamed of. This is most true of what we call the "fine arts," but if you can learn to link imagination with creation, whether what you dream of is an easier way to start a car on a cold morning or a cake that takes less butter, the time that you spend in dreaming won't be wasted.

Sadism

On the surface there is one fault or vice which appears so hideous and anti-social that there would seem to be no chance of finding any sublimation of it. This is "sadism," which originally meant obtaining sexual pleasure through inflicting pain, but is now used of all pleasure gained by making others suffer. Possibly because it goes so very far back in the individual's life—often to impressions of the nature of the sex act as an assault gained from seeing things which one "was not supposed to see" in early childhood—sadism is difficult to cure entirely without prolonged psychiatric treatment, and the average individual who has his share of it usually must accept the fact, and see what can be done to use it to his own advantage and his neighbours'. Fortunately, there are ways to do this—acts

in which the element of cruelty is neutralized by performing a real service to the victim or to mankind. Vivisection offers at least a potential outlet for sadistic impulses, yet millions of lives have been saved by it. Or, again, by this time it may not be a too shocking idea that a surgeon may be an unconscious, "sublimated" sadist—as, in turn, your dentist may be also. I have known at least one surgeon—and a very great one indeed—who admitted his sadistic tendencies quite frankly, and told me he had to be on guard against them in his social and emotional life.

Then, again, some element of sadism must be at the bottom of the choice of a profession in which the punitive side of the law is the central factor. And yet as the world is organized, we could hardly dispense with our prison wardens and guards, or even our old-time "hard-boiled" army sergeants. Even the teacher who is too "soft-hearted" (which might mean, too much afraid of his own repressed sadistic tendencies) to punish those pupils who cannot be kept in order in more civilized ways needs to be freed from his inhibitions and learn to release the harshness which his work sometimes requires.

Still again, there are our humorists, particularly those whose humour runs to satire (don't forget that the Greek root from which "sarcasm" comes means "to tear flesh"). Miss Dorothy Parker may be personally a most kindly person, but the *mots* on which her fame rests—e.g. "*The House Beautiful* is the play lousy"—have an unmistakably sadistic appeal. Mark Twain, one of the great humorists of all time, was scarcely a lover or admirer of mankind, even though he was more cruel to himself than to anyone else. And as heartily as I admire Mr. Fred Allen, I could hardly say his broadcasts drip the milk of human kindness. In short, by directing your sadism towards things (like cancer) or people (like hypocrites) that are enemies of mankind, you may be as sadistic as you please, not only without punishment, but with real profit.

Can We Sublimate Sex?

A common mistake in speaking of sublimation is confusing it with substitution. This parallels the even more common error of supposing that "adjustment" means resigning yourself to

frustration. A key that does not fit the lock certainly is not adjusted to it, nor are your desires adjusted to reality until you have found how to satisfy them. And in the same way a course of action which provides no actual fulfilment of a natural desire is not a sublimation of it. It is merely substituting something which leaves the desire as unfulfilled as ever.

This is a brief answer to the question whether the sex impulse can be sublimated. Compared to the crude forms in which it appears in early childhood, the sexual pleasure quest is sublimated in the sexual union of a man and a woman who truly love each other. But to talk of art or music, or even acts of benevolence as "sublimations of sex" is sheer nonsense. They may be—and often are—*by-products* of the sexual impulse, but their value to the person and in the long run even to others depends on their being actual by-products, not mere substitutes which leave him still frustrated.

Residual traces of pre-genital sex urges can be and are often sublimated, as when a man sublimates mouth erotism by learning to be a connoisseur of vintage wines or a food expert. Psychoanalysis shows that modelling and painting are at the bottom sublimations of a child's delight in smearing his own messes; in fact, finger-painting—to say nothing of some artists' brush work—makes this not hard to see. But the harsh fact is that there is no substitute for genital sex and that no one can find lasting happiness or mental health who tries to live entirely without it. And if we use the word "sublimation" in its proper sense of "raising to a higher level" we face Dr. Karl A. Menninger's unanswerable question. "How is it possible to 'sublimate' sexuality when sexuality is already the highest and finest thing we know?"

For that matter sexuality is not a "fault," and if you think it is, your *mind*, not your habits, is what needs re-education.

But if you wish to convert your actual faults into assets by the sublimation process, here are three suggestions:

Three Suggestions

1. Be honest with yourself as to the impulse you are sublimating. This is where "accepting yourself" comes in. For if you still feel ashamed or guilty at knowing you cherish a desire

for the satisfaction of which you are seeking an "emotional equivalent," the sense of guilt will be carried over to the new activity, and make you ashamed or anxious, even though you may be doing nothing anyone but yourself thinks "wrong." So-called "stage fright," for example, is an obvious expression of the sense of guilt associated with the original exhibitionistic impulse, for expressing which the actor still feels he is going to be punished—in this case, by the refusal of the audience's approval. Or, again, if you are volunteering advice from a natural and harmless if unconscious wish to gain a feeling of importance, at least recognize what you are doing and admit it to yourself without shame. You will be much less apt to try to attach a quality of supreme importance or of superhuman lack of bias to what you say, or to press your counsel to the point of trying to rob the other person of his freedom.

2. Don't forget that sublimation is the product of a flexible mind. If you cannot achieve what you want in one way, don't slip back into the feeling that you have no right to get it at all or that you will probably get into trouble if you try to do so. If you are an incurable duffer at golf, learn to play bridge; and if no one likes your singing, learn to dance, or make the world's best cookies. Anyhow, keep trying!

3. Finally, remember that the core of sublimation is that the activities which satisfy you and give you pleasure shall 'do the same for other people—at least in the long run. Nothing could be further from reality than the idea that it is possible to get away with leading a do-as-you-please existence. But the fact remains that you can usually find *some* way to satisfy even those impulses which you were taught to feel were most strictly forbidden and yet remain a respected, law-abiding citizen and a well-loved neighbour

PART TWO

GETTING ON IN THE WORLD

CHAPTER VI

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN LUCK

WE HAVE BEEN THINKING of happiness as a goal to be achieved by adjusting our immediate aims and wishes to reality so that in the long run we will get what will satisfy our needs and desires. But adjustment is not the whole story, there is another factor in the success of our quest for happiness which cannot be ignored, however much we differ as to its importance. That factor is variously known as luck, chance, fate, or destiny, and for our present purpose includes all that happens or is done to us irrespective of anything we do, from the weather to having an unknown relative leave us a million dollars. The idea that "luck" in this sense is the finally decisive factor in our being happy or unhappy is expressed in the word happiness itself, which originally meant having the right things "happen" to you—both words stemming from the same Old English root "hap," which means "chance."

At the first stage of your contact with the problem of how to get what you wanted, you inevitably felt that it was *all* luck, because at the time that was true. When you were a newborn baby happiness or pleasure did "just happen" to you and you had no notion *why* it happened—or sometimes mysteriously didn't. But soon came the second stage at which you began to realize that your wails of protest when your wishes were denied led somehow to their being gratified, and so came to feel the wishes themselves had the power to bring about their own fulfilment. At the third stage you recognized that another person—whom you came to recognize as Mother—was the agency through whom your pleasures came if they came at all, though

you still had no idea why she should give you what you wanted at one moment and withhold it the next. The fourth stage was when it dawned on you that if you behaved one way Mother was pleased and would satisfy your cravings—especially for love and affection—while if you were “naughty,” as she called it, she was displeased and both happiness and safety were lost. It was only slowly that you reached the fifth and last stage of discovering that there were ways of getting what you wanted for yourself by your own efforts. That was the birth of emotional maturity, but it was years before you realized (if you have ever really done so) that anything you could do was as important as pleasing your mother and father and other authorities whom you came to recognize as sharing their powers.

The Development of Self-reliance

All this was a sort of evolution broadly parallel to the psycho-sexual evolution which we previously studied. In this case, as in that, certain people relatively stand still at each stage of progress, and some traces of each stage remain even in those who progress farthest. And in either case if progress is blocked or retarded, the impediment is fear associations, although in the development of self-reliance fears associated with attempts to gain sexual pleasure are strengthened by other frightening discoveries such as that the “pretty fire” will burn you. The more trouble of all kinds that you got into when you first began to act on your own initiative, the greater the probability that, consciously or not, you will feel you must look to agencies outside of yourself for happiness rather than “go out and get it.” And no matter what you come to think these agencies are or whether you see them as personal or impersonal, the more you rely upon them, the more you are what dynamic psychology calls “dependent” rather than independent, self-reliant, and emotionally adult.

Each of the five stages in the growth of self-reliance is reflected in the attitude toward life of certain types of people who have never at heart grown up. The first stage, that of the newborn baby, is reflected in supposedly adult life as “fatalism.” Every now and then someone will tell you he believes that everything that happens is “predestined” and that nothing we can do

will change it This idea may be a source of comfort in those relatively rare situations in which we are actually helpless, but nobody acts on it consistently, whatever his protestations. A soldier may tell you that he will not die until a bullet comes along "with his name on it," but that doesn't stop his diving for the nearest foxhole when the shells come over. In fact, except as a comforting illusion, the belief that everything is "pure luck" has value only as an alibi for failure, and even then hardly anyone except the person who excuses himself with it quite accepts it

The Magic Wish

A much larger share of us remain at the second stage—that of belief in the power of our wishes—and few of us ever quite outgrow it Only a few years ago thousands of otherwise sensible people came out of the movie theatres chanting happily: "Wishing Will Make It So " And to this day anyone who can come forward with a cult which plausibly confirms this notion is sure of a following and a fortune.

An elaboration of the "magic wish" idea with just enough truth in it to make it more dangerous than if it were obvious nonsense is the belief in "will power"—the foundation stone of the philosophy of "success" which in practice means more to the average American than any conventional religion. You had an unusual education if you were not assured that you could have—or be—"anything you wanted if you wanted it hard enough." The qualification that was usually left out of this teaching is that it is true only in so far as your wanting inspires you to *learn* how what you want can be had and *work* to get it, and that merely wanting, no matter how "terribly," will get you nothing. Still less did most of your teachers impress on you (because it was something they did not know themselves) the fact that to want anything wholeheartedly is possible only for a single-minded or "well-integrated" person Most of us are apt to find in practice that when it comes to a pinch—for instance, in attempting to give up a bad habit—"will power" fails us, and however hard we may berate ourselves for weakness, we cannot go through with the undertaking Or again, when we do achieve what we want we may find that it does not satisfy us and that other deeper wants have gone unheeded.

Gamblers are Childish

Midway between this stage and the next comes that curious tribe, the gamblers. And the fact that their obsession with "luck" is so profoundly childish is one reason why it is so hard to re-educate them. On one side you will not want to gamble if you don't believe you will win, although this belief has often no grounds except that you want to so much. On the other side, the gambler apparently passes to the third stage of development by trying to make his "luck" a mother ("Lady Luck," he calls her), and believing that he can propitiate her by methods which are just as childish as those by which a baby tries to win his mother's favour. It is characteristic of the gambler that whatever name he gives it, he almost invariably believes in magic—that is, the attempt to produce results by actions that have no logical connection with them. Superstition is another aspect of the same attempt to deal with what we do not understand by methods based on an association of ideas we may not even know or have forgotten—when you touch wood, for example, how often do you remember that the wood originally meant the "True Cross"?

Much religious faith is an expression of the fourth stage of development toward mature self-reliance. It means that you still believe you must depend upon a force outside yourself to make you happy, but see that force as a "person" who is as all-powerful as Mother and Father once seemed, and whose help you may obtain by appeasement or propitiation. An intelligent, well-educated man told me that he had just learned that his son would be a lifelong cripple from a brain injury at birth. And he asked, quite seriously, "Do you think if I gave up my mistress and led a good life from now on God might be pleased enough to make my boy get well?" Even a priest once said to me. "You know, your idea of reality is much tougher than religion—after all you always have a chance of putting something over on God, but against reality you are helpless."

Is there any "Luck" at All?

But what is reality in this case? Science seems to turn thumbs down completely on both luck and magic, if not even on religion. The further we have investigated the material and mental

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worlds, the surer we become that whatever happens is the product of definite, adequate, and discoverable causes and that it is only when we do not know these causes that we can attribute anything to chance. A physicist friend of mine says there is really no luck even in the flipping of a coin, since if you knew enough about dynamics, air resistance, and other such forces you could predict whether the coin would show heads or tails as accurately as a ballistic expert can predict the speed of a projectile.

But we do *not* have this knowledge, so far as we are concerned the results of the toss-up are still unpredictable and "accidental." And even in cases where we understand—and therefore theoretically could control—a single event, we are wholly at a loss as to why two or more events "happen" together. Not so long ago a man was walking innocently down the street when an explosion took place in the cleaning shop that he was passing and the plate-glass window blew out on his head and killed him. Had he stopped a moment longer to look at the neckties in the window down the block, he might be living to-day, but he did not, and as far as we can yet see, could not know this. So however self-reliant we may try to be, the reality to which we must adjust ourselves includes the fact that things *can* happen to us for which we are in no way responsible, and as far as such things are concerned, we are still helpless.

At the same time there are very few occasions on which we are faced with *pure* coincidence, and far more in which at least part of what happens is the obvious result of our own actions. In one sense the pretty movie starlet merely "happened" to be in the drugstore when the talent scout came in for his mid-morning coke, but it was no accident that she had raided Mother's make-up box before she left home or was wearing a dress she had been told to save for Sundays. Again, you can say it was sheer hard luck that the drunken driver ran into your car and not somebody else's, but are you quite sure that if you had been strictly on the *qui vive* you might not have been able to avoid him?

Because science seems to tell us one thing and experience another, most of us live in a state of mind which is a compromise between our education and our childish feelings. When we get sick, most of us call the doctor instead of exploding fire-crackers

to drive off the evil spirits, but we also "have a feeling" that there must be some way in which our minds can control our destinies so that we shall not be wholly victims of chance. As we have seen to be the case with other intuitive ideas, this one has some truth in it. We might compare some of the earlier attempts to demonstrate the "power of mind over matter"—or even the Christian miracles—with the cases in which primitive man, under the guise of magic, performed acts which actually brought about the desired result by scientific methods. I doubt whether the first men who found they could make fire by rubbing two sticks together knew it was the heat produced by friction that got the blaze started. They probably thought the process would not have worked without the right incantations or appeals to the "fire goddess." But they did get fire!

Mental Healing

The same principle applies to earlier and to some contemporary efforts in the field of "mental healing." We know better every year that what psychiatrists call "anxiety" is the cause of an enormous share of all disease, and that therefore if you can allay a sufferer's anxiety, he will "miraculously" get well. It would be a bigot, not an honest sceptic, who denied that people have gone to the Grotto of Lourdes seriously ill and come back recovered, or that methods such as those of Christian Science have often been startlingly effective. Psychology of the pre-dynamic type has achieved similar results by suggestion or "auto-suggestion," and it was by no means pure imagination that a lot of people really felt greatly improved in health and spirits—at least for the moment—by repeating, "Every day in every way I am getting better and better." But effective as suggestion has been in some cases, there are others in which it has failed completely. Many earnest believers in "mental healing" have died needlessly because they were afraid or ashamed to go to a doctor even with diseases such as cancer, and many more have "felt better" for a time, only to end by finding that they were worse off than ever. And there's little use in saying that this was because they did not have "enough faith" unless we can tell them where to get it, even if the fact were not that most of them *had* faith, and lost it because it failed them.

The truth is that you *can* use your mind to keep disease from "happening" to you, but it must be *all* your mind, not just the fraction of which you are conscious. And the trouble with much "faith" and all "suggestion" is that what it does is to repress still further into the unconscious part of your mind the emotions that have caused your illness, often leaving them to work as potently as ever, if not more so. If the cause of your anxiety is fear of being punished for some childish offence (as is true in perhaps a majority of cases), it will do no lasting good to bottle up this fear by telling yourself that "nothing can harm you." The fear must be brought to consciousness and rooted out before the illness it has caused can really be cured.

Can Your Thinking affect Your Luck?

The same thing is true from the dynamic standpoint of all other attempts to influence your luck by "thinking." An "affirmative" or "expectant" attitude can do much to bring you good fortune if the attitude expresses your real feelings. But if your conscious mind feels one way and the far more powerful unconscious feels the other, "holding the right thought" does no good whatsoever. A picture that often comes into my mind in this connection is the scene in the old-fashioned melodrama where the heroine pretends to yield to the villain's embraces, but behind her back waves a white handkerchief to call the hero to her rescue. In this case the heroine is the unconscious, which wants what it thinks will give us pleasure, while the villain it hates is the call of duty or of moral obligation. Many a man has been puzzled at the lack of results from his grim determination to succeed, when his real, unconscious desire was to have a good time and to take life easy.

Certainly if there were such a thing as "pure luck" it should work according to the laws of mathematical probability. But the "breaks" in real life follow no such pattern. On the contrary, some people seem to be consistently "unlucky," and, what's more, a closer study shows that they quite regularly run into the *same kind* of misfortune. Though he tries to be the best of husbands, John is "two-timed" by one wife after another, while Mary invariably has the "tough luck" to fall for a man who she finds is already married. Young Bill has a series of mean

and unfair employers, and his father fails in business in spite of apparent honesty, intelligence, and perseverance. And after a certain number of unfortunate coincidences, the friends of these people naturally grow suspicious. They begin to feel that something is wrong somewhere, and they are right. It is not relentless fate that dogs these people's footsteps—they are victims of their own neurotic patterns of thought and behaviour, or what Freud called "fate neurosis."

"Fate Neurosis"

How does this work?

Whether we know it or not (and we are usually quite unconscious of it) each of us goes on from childhood into adult life with a load of what dynamic psychology calls "unsolved problems"—that is, situations which were never worked out to our satisfaction, and so always remain the "unfinished business" of life. They may involve failure to discover any way in which to win the love which a child needs so desperately, as in the case of "the man who had to be sick"¹. They may represent a thwarted desire for revenge on someone who was cruel or unfair to us, which, through false identification of quite inoffensive people with the object of our hatred, may lead us to pick unreasonable quarrels even with those who try hardest to befriend us. Or, worst of all, our minds may be held in duress by the unsolved problem of a sin or wrong for which we felt that we were never adequately punished. For, as we saw in the chapter on conscience, there is no problem harder to leave unsolved than a sense of unatoned guilt.

The need to be punished may provoke us into actions that appear inexplicable because we are unconscious of the motives that provoke them, as in the case of the person who is driven by an irresistible compulsion to commit crimes from which he derives no profit. Kleptomania, for instance, is a combination of the problems of revenge and of the need to be punished. One of my most tragic letters came from a man who began: "I am sixty years old and, though the shame of it is almost more than I can bear, I have been a thief all my life." He went on to describe a series of petty larcenies executed with such skill that he had never been detected, but involving either

¹ See Chapter I.

articles which had no value for him or things which he could not let himself keep. His latest offence, for instance, had been stealing a watch, which he had immediately thrown into the river. Without knowing the man personally, one can only guess that it was someone's love he had originally been robbed of; that his stealing represented an unconscious attempt to get even; and that the continuous state of guilt and self-reproach he lived in provided the necessary punishment for daring to "fight back."

Punishing Ourselves

More frequently, though, the problem of getting oneself adequately punished for some childish offence which has long since dropped out of our conscious memories creates a blind impulse to ruin our hopes and prospects by our own behaviour. I once knew a woman who was for a time world-famous as an operatic singer. But although her voice was one to which I have heard few equals, she eventually ruined her career because any time she had an especially important engagement, she would either fail to appear for it, or arrive in an advanced stage of intoxication. The ironical fact was that this woman had no conscious troubles to "forget." In addition to her voice, she had considerable beauty, good health, and a wealthy and devoted husband. But at the beginning of her rise to fame she had been ruthlessly neglectful of her humble parents and this was the penalty conscience exacted.

But a fate neurosis in the form of an unconscious urge to self-destruction may work in less obvious forms and may involve injury to others as well as to oneself. I happened to go to college with the victim of one of the most tragic and apparently inexplicable blunders in medical history. Ted R. in his teens developed an infection in one eye which was so serious that it was decided the eye must be removed before the other became affected. When the time came for the operation, the surgeon, a man of unspotted reputation and certainly not intoxicated, "absent-mindedly" removed the good eye, leaving Ted blind for life. At this distance we cannot be sure just what unconscious drive forced Dr. S. to ruin his reputation as well as a young man's future, but at least what happened was a good deal more than "accident" or "hard luck." In the end, the doctor naturally

gave up practice, left the city, and was said to have continued life under an assumed name; while Ted, I am glad to say, made a successful adjustment to his handicap, and when I last heard of him had achieved a notable success in one of the learned professions.

Unconscious Self-revelation

While I believe our mental attitudes control our destinies to a far greater degree than most of us realize, there is nothing mysterious or supernatural about the way they do so. Your mind, and particularly your unconscious mind, is the most potent factor in creating your luck, but it does so through its effect on your *actions*, and through the *reactions* these arouse in other people. For however self-controlled or "poker-faced" you may think you are, you can unintentionally reveal much more of what is going on in your mind than you are aware of. In my early thirties, in a mood of revolt against trying to live on a minister's pay, I decided that I wanted to go into business. I got an appointment with a prominent insurance agent and asked him to tell me what I should do to become a salesman. We discussed the question for perhaps ten minutes, when Mr. A. suddenly turned on me and said: "Mr. Gould, what are you here for? You don't really want to sell insurance." I gulped and exclaimed, "You're quite right! I would rather go to jail than attempt to sell *anything*. Please excuse me for wasting your time."

The strange fact is that the more or less neurotic distaste for the idea of a business career which I had revealed so unmistakably to this acute observer had been something which for the time being I myself was wholly unaware of. I told Mr. A. more about myself than I knew, as of course most of us do, particularly to a trained observer such as a psychologist. A person in my profession is sometimes accused of being a "mind-reader," even though no one knows quite as well as we do that there is no way of reading anybody's mind except through his behaviour. Yet by such unconscious movements, gestures, tones of voice, and so on, as those by which I killed my chance of becoming an insurance salesman, you may lose the job or fail to win the friendship which you think you wholeheartedly desire.

The fact that most people treat us as we expect to be treated

is again not based on any magical thought transference or mysterious current of emotion. It, too, is the result of unconscious self-revelation. For in any given situation we are likely to react emotionally, not to the situation itself, but to the *mental picture* we painted of it beforehand. If you approach a prospective employer with a mental picture of his trying to belittle your qualifications or rejecting you for arbitrary reasons, then so far as your emotions are concerned you have already been "turned down" before you even pass the great man's threshold. Your heart is filled with resentment, and perhaps defiance, and you cannot possibly do yourself justice or give the impression of being the sort of person anyone would want to work with. And, of course, the same thing may and often does occur in personal relations. I know an attractive young woman, for instance, who is deeply concerned over her inability to retain men's interest. As a rule, she makes an excellent first impression and is likely to be asked for at least one date. But there seldom is a second, and this is not—as she admits—because she is unduly prudish. The poor girl, unfortunately, has by now come to the point where she "just knows the man won't like her." She meets him at the front door with a chip on her shoulder which he can't help recognizing and this puts him so much on guard that the evening usually breaks up in a quarrel. Phyllis certainly has "bad luck" with men, but the luck is of her making.

Don't "Cross Bridges"

If you have faced either of these types of difficulty, you can improve your own "luck" immeasurably by the simple process of not crossing bridges until you get to them. You won't find it does much good to tell yourself in advance that "everything is going to work out all right," because something deep inside you will inevitably respond, "How do you know?" All you need to do is accept the fact that *you don't know*. Whether you are looking for a job or trying to win the affections of somebody who attracts you, you *cannot tell* whether you are going to succeed until you try, and had much better concentrate your energies on trying than on seeking to predict the chance of your succeeding. This is all the more true because the best way to succeed is always to adapt yourself to circumstances, and the

more rigidly you picture the circumstances in advance, the less able you will be to see and adapt yourself to what they actually turn out to be.

This matter of "seeing" is the basis of another vitally important element in making your own luck. We seldom have any notion of the complexity of our experience at any given moment, or the multiplicity of outside stimuli which clamour for our attention. As you read these pages, there are dozens of other impressions besides those you get from my words which are ready to distract you if you let them. For example, there is a mass of sensations both inside and outside your body which you seldom notice. You could even—as certain neurotics do—"drive yourself crazy" by allowing yourself to be fully conscious of the contact of your clothes with your skin. But again, no matter how determinedly you shut out all distractions and concentrate on what you are reading, you will still unconsciously select and "see" the words or ideas that appeal to your emotional needs, and ignore the others. Nothing is more startling to any writer or speaker than the meanings other people will "get out of" his words—as I expect to discover afresh when I come to read the reviews of this book.

You get What You Look For

But even in situations in which you are not consciously concentrating and think you are ready to receive whatever impressions may arise, you are still unconsciously making a selection, and a relatively limited one. Suppose, for example, that a man, his wife, and their young son go out for a Sunday-afternoon stroll. The man, out of all available impressions, may notice primarily the pretty girls who go by, the wife will notice the same girls, but give most or all of her attention to what they are wearing; while the small boy will be watching for new models of cars, or possibly listening for the fire engines. In this sense, at any rate, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that you do get out of life *what you are looking for*, and that one of the best ways of getting happiness and success is to keep your eyes open for them. For while life presents us with an endless series of experiences and situations, none of which originally is of our making, each of them contains an almost limitless

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number of possibilities for happiness or misfortune, and our *attitude of mind* determines which we recognize and try to make the most of.

I might even say that the most frequent cause of failure in life, whether from a business or a human standpoint, is the tendency so many of us have to go about with our eyes and ears closed. Inwardly, we are so absorbed in our own conflicts that we give our neighbours scant attention, and then wonder why they do not like us better. Yet the surest of all ways to get on with a person is to "pay attention to him"—to listen to what he says and try to determine what he means and wants. In any case, until we know this, it will be impossible to adjust ourselves to him intelligently.

There probably was never a great opportunity in life which was not passed by thousands of people before the man came by who had the eyes to see it and the will to grasp it. There are even few calamities which do not contain constructive and valuable potentialities for whoever has the will to seize them. So while nobody can promise you the power to make *all* your own luck, you can certainly have a much larger share in making it than you have probably believed until now. And this share will steadily increase in proportion as you learn to adjust yourself realistically and intelligently to the world you live in.

CHAPTER VII

YOU CAN LEARN TO FEEL SECURE

UP TO THIS POINT, we have spoken of the Pleasure Principle primarily in what might be called its positive form—the active attempt to get the satisfactions which we feel will make us happy. But, as you will remember, the same principle has a reverse or negative side—the desire to avoid pain. And not only must both sides be satisfied before happiness can be attained, but with many people the reverse side becomes much the more important.

On the whole, though, the worst enemy of happiness is not pain, which is relatively rare in most of our lives; it is the emotional state which we call “anxiety.” While both words imply the threat of danger, “anxiety” differs from “fear” in that it is based upon a threat which is mysterious, exaggerated, and often unreal, whereas “fear” describes the natural reaction of a sentient being to the menace of actual pain or injury. You feel fear when you see an approaching truck which you are not sure you can dodge, or when you hear the shriek of a shell coming toward you. But you may suffer from anxiety without any factual reason, or any clear idea beyond the impression that “something terrible is going to happen.”

A State of Mind

As long as an animal—or a small child—is experiencing pleasure, he is happy, but as we grow older we cease to be able to live wholly in the moment. To be happy, we not only must have pleasure, but must not feel that it may be taken from us without warning, and pain perhaps substituted for it. Fear that this may happen is what creates anxiety, and the absence of fear makes us *secure* in the primal sense of being “free from care”—that is, from anxiety. The security which dynamic psychology teaches you how to acquire is therefore *a state of*

mind, as distinct from physical or factual safety, which is quite a different problem.

If our happiness and pleasure never had been interrupted, the need of emotional security would never have arisen, but because in practice there are always interruptions—often very serious and painful ones—the need for security and the quest of something on which we can base it become as much the goal of the average person's life as does the quest for pleasure, and in many cases even takes precedence over it. Indeed, because pleasure and security so often seem incompatible with each other (as you cannot always have the pleasure of taking a day off without risking the security of your job), the average person's life is to no small degree a conflict between the claims of these two goals, with whichever one seems more remote assuming primary importance. A typical if neurotic form of the exaggerated quest for security is that of the miser who so desperately needs the sense of safety which the ownership of money gives him that he almost or entirely forgets that money actually gets you nothing except when you spend it. And a still more common instance is the girl whose need for the security which she associates with marriage drives her into marrying a man she does not really love rather than risk remaining single.

Some Anxiety Inevitable

As life is, some degree of anxiety appears inevitable. There is reason to believe that it begins during the actual process of birth, which is now thought to be just about as painful for the child as for the mother, and which anyhow involves a terrifying change from the peace, comfort, and protection the infant had previously enjoyed. According to the psychoanalysts, further anxiety develops in the baby through the contrast between the intensity of his instinctive urges—his hunger, for instance—and his utter inability to satisfy them, or be sure that anybody else will satisfy them for him. Child psychiatrists to-day are vigorous in their opposition to keeping a baby on a rigid feeding schedule because of the terror and anxiety aroused in his mind when he feels the pains of hunger, and for all that he can tell, may starve to death before you get around to giving him his dinner. Equally intense anxiety may be created by too

early and strict toilet training, again because the child has no way of knowing that you are not really trying to forbid his satisfying his instinctive urges at all, but are only asking him to postpone his pleasure to a time convenient for you

The primal anxiety of infantile helplessness is later intensified by the sense of guilt a child acquires from being punished when he attempts to gain pleasure through expressing other natural impulses in ways which you disapprove of—above all, through early forms of sexual indulgence, and all our anxiety is ultimately mobilized in the service of the Super-Ego. In extreme cases, it may create phobias and neuroses, in more normal people, it becomes the basis of a conscious mood or state of mind called insecurity which to-day is nearly universal. "Anxiety" and "insecurity" are more or less interchangeable, but I believe we shall find it useful to reserve "anxiety" for unconscious feelings and to use "insecurity" for states of mind which are either fully conscious or subconscious—that is, able to be brought into consciousness "when we stop to think about them "

Defences

Because insecurity is so painful an emotion, all of us develop a variety of defences against it. The first and most universal of these is the mechanism of repression, through which we drive out of consciousness the feelings or desires which it would make us feel guilty—and thus insecure—to let ourselves be aware of. The process, of course, is never entirely successful, and yet for the average person life would be unendurable without it. And because even this unreal basis of security is so precious to us, there is no surer way to arouse anyone's implacable hostility than to attack it.

The hostility which Freud met in so many quarters when he first began exposing the repressions that civilized men had built up (and that still exist in many quarters, not only among the pious folk, but even with a dwindling minority of conservative physicians) shows this clearly. And of course, the same reaction takes place in an individual psychoanalysis, where the analyst expects a patient to have moods of murderous hatred toward him, and even express a wish to kill him in some painful and protracted manner. I recall one young man saying to me:

"I lay awake all last night thinking how I would like to wring your neck, and the most beautiful sound that I could imagine was to hear your bones 'snick.' " But one meets the same reaction in a more or less unconscious form even in social contacts. I have long since had to recognize that many people I meet are suspicious or unfriendly, not because of anything I have done to them, but because I represent to their unconscious minds a threat to their repressions and to the false security these give them.

In the same way you will always make a bitter enemy of anyone who comes to regard you as a threat to the ideas or institutions on which his sense of security is based—his religion, philosophy, social standing, financial position, and, above all, his idea of himself. And perhaps the most illuminating thing one can know about any given person is what his particular sense of security is based on, and to what extent his life is centred on seeking security rather than on happiness or pleasure. For the more this is true, the more he will be at heart on the defensive, and so inclined to be hostile and suspicious in his attitude toward you

False Security

A sense of security may be achieved—at least for the time being—upon almost any basis, however unrealistic it may seem to the outsider. One of the more memorable novels about World War I was *Company K*, by William March, which consists of a series of vignettes of the individual members of a fighting unit, and includes a devastatingly acid picture of a "hero." Before going overseas, Private Martin Passy had been to a fortune-teller, who assured him, "You will not be killed or even wounded," and his confidence in her was so unswerving that he was completely fearless even in the hottest action, because he "knew nothing could touch him." His "faith" was as satisfying while it lasted as any faith could be, though one can imagine the emotional disaster that even a slight wound would have involved. But some degree of the same sort of disillusionment is practically universal, since most of us who enjoy a healthy childhood grow up with the feeling that catastrophe is something which can strike only the other fellow, and few of us reach adult years with that bright illusion left

unshattered For that matter, the loss of security is characteristic of contemporary civilization Science and invention have contributed to the loss, partly through the new devices with which men can threaten one another, and I think still more by the collapse of religious certainty, even in the minds of those who try to cling to their faith most desperately.

A list of the psychological and practical effects of insecurity would include almost everything in human nature, individual or collective, that prevents or threatens the happiness of mankind. In the first place, along with frustration, insecurity is at the root of all the impulses which we have called "aggressive," that is, every impulse to hurt or destroy our fellow human beings. For anger and fear are so completely two sides of the same emotion that one cannot possibly feel one without the other. You cannot by any possibility regard a person as dangerous to you without wishing to destroy him, no matter how much you may repress the wish because you think it wrong to entertain it. And anxiety is more subtly dangerous than fear, since because it gives you no clue as to the nature of the potential menace or where the danger may come from, it may spur you to attack the first completely innocent and harmless object you can lay your hands on

Prejudice and bigotry are effects of insecurity, because from the standpoint of our childish emotions even the existence of a person who is basically different from us, or who does not recognize the truth of the beliefs which our security is based on, is a menace to it. The age-old quest for truth *quod semper, quod ubique, et quod ab omnibus*—what has always, everywhere, and by all—been believed illustrates this

Insecurity and Selfishness

Insecurity is the chief cause of "selfishness," as most people use the word—that is, of the tendency to ignore the rights and needs of others in comparison with one's own If there were enough cookies to go around, or if he were sure that he could have another any time he wanted it, little Willie would not be so apt to grab the biggest one the first time the plate comes his way. Nor would Willie's father be so eager to take all the credit for the fact that his department shows a profit if he were sure that his good work would be properly appreciated and

rewarded. And I might add that if Willie's mother were sure she was getting, and would always get, her fair share of the family income, she would not be so insistent on having a fur coat whether her husband could afford to pay his golf dues or not.

Insecurity is the obvious cause of most marital jealousy—indeed, of all such jealousy that is not based on actual infidelity of the partner or on a specific threat of it. And note that it is not primarily the other partner about whom the jealous one feels insecure; it is himself or herself. It is valid or neurotic fear of losing one's power to attract a member of the other sex that is the basic cause of jealousy, as you may see by simply reflecting that a man who believed he was the most attractive male on earth could not possibly suspect his wife of liking anyone else better than she did him.

The relation between insecurity and war should need no argument at this stage of the world's history. We know by now only too well how a leading group in any nation which desires war for its own aggrandizement employs the machinery of propaganda to convince the people that they are about to be attacked by some other nation, and that in sheer "self-defence" they should attack first.

But if insecurity is at the root of these and other hateful qualities and actions, all of which eventually produce unhappiness for those who have or do them, the achievement of security must be essential not only to being happy but to ridding yourself of the personal characteristics which you consider faults or sins, but have found yourself unable to cure by will power or determination. In fact, the nearer you can come to feeling secure even in a world as menacing as this one appears, the more amiable, admired, and loved you will be.

Three Kinds of Security

Security—which, remember, is primarily a mental attitude—is of three kinds, which may be called infantile, adult, and intermediate.

Security is infantile when and whenever it is based on the belief that we are going to be taken care of by some agency outside of ourselves without effort on our own part. This type

of security is absolutely necessary for a child—so much so that if he does not enjoy it, it is most unlikely that he ever will develop any other type when he is older. Whether a child most needs to feel safe or to feel sure his parents love him is not worth discussing, because from his standpoint the two mean the same thing. Indeed, war experience has shown that to a small child actual danger like that of a "blitz" has a less serious effect than separation from those who love and take care of him—especially his mother. And, of course, most people always have sought more or less effectually to carry the sense of being loved and taken care of on into adult life by believing in a "Heavenly Father"—or a "Virgin Mother"—upon whom they may still rely as they did upon their parents. From this standpoint it is—at least psychologically true that, as Voltaire said, "If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent Him."

But unfortunately, after two world wars and a depression it is hard to credit any longer the idea that the Almighty takes care of those who obey and trust Him—anyhow, as most of us were taught to believe this. You would find it hard, for instance, to convince the average wife or mother of a soldier killed in action that he died because he was less virtuous than his comrades, though, of course, there are still many who came home safe who attribute the fact to divine intervention. But if the religious type of infantile security has suffered gravely from the events of the last thirty-odd years, what religious people would scorn as the "worldly" type has been even more seriously damaged. No one to-day feels more terrifyingly insecure than the men and women whose sense of security is based on property and investments. For however hard they strive to ward off the appalling thought, these people are being compelled to realize that they can retain their wealth no longer than the mass of mankind will consent to let them do so, and that revolution would deprive them of all that makes life worth living from their standpoint.

I do not, of course, mean to imply that any individual can ever become so powerful or isolated as to achieve complete independence of all other agencies or persons. As the world is organized, for instance, we could not sleep without trusting the police force; and the fact that our trust is sometimes misplaced makes it no less psychologically necessary to us. But

the difference between a childish and an adult feeling of security in such cases is that the adult recognizes that security is not, and never can be absolute, and accepts the fact that life cannot be wholly free from danger without letting the existence of its dangers keep him in continual panic.

Self-reliance

On the other hand, the fundamental basis of *adult* security is self-reliance—the feeling that on the whole you have the power to avoid disaster and achieve the satisfactions that you want *through your own efforts*. Yet even this feeling is mature and valid only so far as it is based upon facts. The attempt to gain it in defiance of the facts—or as a defence against being forced to recognize them—leads to such unpleasant characteristics as conceit or boasting. It is a commonplace of dynamic psychology that conceit is not a vice, but a “defence mechanism,” which the person with real confidence in himself has no need to develop. True, a person with real confidence in his abilities may seem conceited to the envious, as witness the story of the remark attributed to the great Arturo Toscanini: “I have never said I am the best conductor—I am just the only good one.” But it certainly is true that without such faith in his abilities and musical ideals, the maestro could hardly have attained the secure pre-eminence which he enjoys in his profession.

A word which has recently come into use among the psychiatrists is “self-esteem”—some measure of which they regard as necessary to normal and happy living. Self-esteem implies a sense of one’s own worth or value, and, like other feelings, this originally develops back in childhood out of one’s relations with one’s parents. If you grew up with the idea that neither your mother nor your father thought you ever could amount to anything, whatever self-esteem you have achieved is likely to be artificial and defensive. And, of course, the heavier the load of conscious or unconscious guilt you carry, the less self-esteem or “confidence in yourself” you will have, whatever your actual talents and achievements may be. For every “mute, inglorious Milton” whose obscurity is based on having had no real chance, there are half a dozen who have failed of greatness because they are held back by the feeling that they are unworthy of it.

But if you feel free enough of childish inhibitions to recognize that you have abilities and talents, and that there is nothing to prevent your using them to get you what you want out of life, you have the most solid and reliable ground for a sense of security that anyone can have in a changing, insecure world.

The Need to Adapt

At the same time, because the world to-day changes so much and so unpredictably, ability without adaptability is of relatively little value. I do not deny that men with single-track minds have occasionally risen to greatness—most geniuses, for example, are people of this type. But the average reasonably happy and successful person is one who has realized that the talents necessary to success in one field are by no means as distinct from those required in another as is often supposed, or even as some specialists in aptitude tests and vocational guidance seem to believe. To say, for example, that a person who has literary talent can at the same time be “hopeless at mathematics” seems to me as inconsistent as it would be for me to claim that my legs carry me beautifully so long as I walk north, but refuse to function if I try to walk south. I believe the same intelligence can function as effectively in one field as in another, and that only some kind of emotional obstruction—even prejudice against the first teacher one had for a given subject—keeps a person with a healthy mind from doing reasonably well whatever task his needs or his necessities may set before him. And I think one evidence of this is the wide variety of occupations in which many leading men and women nowadays have been employed—you are likely to read on the jacket of the latest popular novel that the writer has been, say, a shipping clerk, a boiler-maker, an insurance salesman, and several other things, before he “found” himself as a writer.

“Belonging”

What I called the intermediate type of security—namely, that which can be either infantile or adult—is the result of “belonging,” of identifying oneself with a group and adding to one’s sense of power to deal with life by feeling one can draw upon the group’s resources. “Group spirit” sometimes

encourages a type of dependence which is strictly childish. The noted Air Force psychiatrist, former Colonel Roy, R. Grinker, described how "lost" and bewildered many aviators felt when discharged from the Service and robbed of the "moral support" of their former officers and comrades. He blames the frustration of the craving to retain this childishly dependent attitude for both actual illness and neurosis and such "over-compensations" as precipitate marriage and alcoholism.

Again, too complete dependence on a group and on conformity to its ideas may result in undesirable suppression of one's individuality and natural desires. And the more insecure the group itself feels, the more pressure will be put on us to make us do this. Nowadays there is an almost hysterical attempt to enforce conformity with the accepted patterns of behaviour and belief on all and sundry, and we seem to be nearing the day when a man who insists on wearing a four-in-hand tie when bows are the fashion may be labelled as a dangerous radical and a traitor to his country. Normal life has or should have room for a wide range of individual differences. As Dr. Edward A. Strecker puts it "A psychiatrist at least knows enough about the human mind not to be afraid to be a little peculiar." But that does not change the basic fact that "It is not good for man to be alone," and that intimate association with like-minded people is next only to self-confidence as a ground for feeling safe and secure, while the sort of temperament that makes a man prefer the role of lone wolf also tends to make him insecure, if not neurotic. Although there's no denying the enormous contribution of the nonconformist to humanity's progress and welfare, he has often made that contribution at the expense of his own happiness and sense of social integration.

Find a Happy Medium

Here, indeed, we come back to the principle of compromise I outlined a few chapters ago. For in many ways security and freedom (the ability to live one's own life in one's own way) represent two mutually inconsistent needs of human nature, and each of us must decide for himself what shall be the "happy medium" between them. At the same time, the more self-reliance or adult security you have, the farther you may swing

the balance of your life toward freedom without feeling too tense and uneasy to be happy. A common by-product of psychoanalysis, for instance, is the feeling of the woman who said, "I'm so glad to realize I don't *have* to like Mozart."

The fact that security is in your mind does not, of course, mean you can have it under all imaginable circumstances. I know of no way in which a prisoner in Dachau or a pilot on a bombing mission could feel secure, or avoid the psychological and physical effects of insecurity. The most that can be said for such people—or for you, if you are faced with actual and appalling danger—is that the more "inner" psychological security a person has developed, the less lasting the effects of danger will be, once he has passed safely through it.

But for most of us, living in a country like ours under anything resembling normal conditions, the actual dangers we are called upon to face would have no great effect upon us if they were not "stepped up" so enormously by our surviving infantile anxiety. In a thunderstorm, for instance, there is a chance of your being struck by lightning and it would be idle to deny it. But how great that chance seems to you—or, in other words, how frightened you are—will depend primarily upon such factors as how strong your secret feeling is that you "deserve" to be struck dead. For the pent-up forces of anxiety in your unconscious mind wait for such chances to assail you in a guise which you can't dismiss as "imaginary," and whether it's lightning, "sitting in a draught," a pain whose cause you don't know, or something a friend did to you which might possibly have expressed unfriendly feelings, the more "free anxiety" there is in your mind the more painfully insecure you will feel. Recently, for instance, a young woman I know spent an entire week end in a state of panic verging on hysteria because she had dropped her vanity case and broken the mirror. And I dare say it may sound fantastic if I say the real root of her feeling proved to be the effects of having been abandoned by her parents when she was six years old.

The whole issue of security, in short, reminds one of the Irishman's advice "Be aisy—and if you can't be aisy, be as aisy as you can." An absolute feeling of security probably cannot be achieved by anyone except a certain type of insane patient who has managed to blot out all consciousness of the

world and its dangers. But this does not mean that almost any one of us may not achieve a greater feeling of security—or freedom from insecurity—by following the lines of such suggestions as these:

Three Suggestions

First, accept the fact that your demand for security, no less than your desire for pleasure, has to be adjusted to reality, which most of the time means being willing to admit that half a loaf is better than no bread. You might even try what I call the statistical approach, which means deciding how much thought you will devote to any given type of danger on the basis of the mathematical probability of its arriving. Few of us, for instance—and none of us who are healthy-minded—devote much attention to the possibility of being killed in a traffic accident, even though that is one of the larger menaces of civilization. And while disease and infection are continuous possibilities, we may learn to take sane precautions to avoid them and then let ourselves forget them.

Second, do what you can—and you may find you can do a good deal—to deflate your fears by stripping them of the accretions they take on from your unconscious anxiety. The best way to do this is to recognize that any fear based on a danger which is not specific and definable probably comes from unconscious sources. So if you find yourself frightened at the prospect of a new job or of meeting someone who may be important to you, ask yourself—and put the answer down in writing if you have to—"What is the worst that possibly could happen if I fail to meet this test?" The trite question, "How much difference will it make a year from now?" will also help in this direction. Stop and think how relatively unimportant many of what seemed your worst mistakes and failures have eventually turned out to be, and you will be less apt to tremble at the thought of others you might still make.

There is little use, if you are inclined to feel insecure, in trying to paint rosy pictures of the future and impressing them on your mind by some form of "suggestion," since at heart you always will know that this is an artificial process. But remember that *the one reality about the future is that it is unknown*, so that any picture, bright or dark, which you paint of it is primarily

a reflection of your own unconscious feelings of what you "have coming to you."

Third, earn a valid feeling of security by making yourself a useful, or at least a pleasure-giving member of society. For whatever changes may occur, the probability is always that no one will harm a person who contributes to his neighbour's welfare, or who gives them pleasure. A particularly striking instance of this was the career of the great Russian basso, Feodor Chaliapin, the one man who was untouched by war and revolution because of the joy his singing brought to Communist and capitalist alike. You may have no comparable talent—or believe you have none—but you do have in your nature, if you will release it, the capacity to make friends and do good work, and in this capacity you may find as much basis for security as life in a chaotic world can afford.

CHAPTER VIII

MUST YOU BE A "SUCCESS"?

A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO I innocently sent the outline of a proposed article to the editor of one of the popular, shiny-paper magazines which writers call the "big slicks."

The piece that I planned was to have been entitled "Ruined by Success," and would have been a study of why getting to the top is frequently a greater "nervous strain" than failure. It isn't the added labour and responsibility that success may bring, or the fatigue caused by the struggle to achieve it, that breaks down so many men who at last attained the high positions or large salaries they have worked for all their lives, it is the fact that success unconsciously involves fulfilling aims that were deeply cherished but even more stringently forbidden back in childhood—above all the aim to grow so big and powerful that they could "tell their parents where to head in." For the more completely you are able to do something for which you were once made to feel you would be punished, the more surely your unconscious sense of guilt will catch up with you and force you to punish yourself, even to the point of self-destruction.

"Un-American"!

My suggestion of an article embodying this principle was promptly rejected with the editorial comment "This idea is un-American!" All unwittingly I had committed sacrilege against what is in many ways the real American religion. For while the degree to which we Americans are dedicated to the worship has been exaggerated—most of all, perhaps, by somewhat envious foreign critics—success remains the one "selfish" goal our Puritan traditions will allow us to admit we cherish, and attaining it has even come to be regarded as conclusive proof, both of our virtue and of the divine approval.

I remember hearing the late Clarence W. Barron, proprietor of the *Wall Street Journal* and of *Barron's Weekly*, seriously tell a group of churchmen that no man could make a million dollars by dishonest methods, or without performing a service to the community at least worthy of the reward it gave him. And certainly in my youth to say a young man was "unambitious" was equivalent to calling him a weakling or a wastrel. True, this point of view is mainly characteristic of the so-called privileged classes, and even to-day public-opinion polls show that the average worker prefers a job in which he can feel secure to an insecure one which offers better chances of advancement. But the idea of success as the normal goal of life is still set before most of our children by the last people on earth who have any real hope of achieving it themselves—the schoolteachers. And the average literate American would be ashamed to admit he does not accept it.

Whether ambition is a virtue or not, the most important question for our present purpose is: Will being a success make you happy? The answer depends, not so much upon the strength of your ambition as upon the motives that inspire it and the method by which it seeks realization.

More Pleasure

Pleasure, rather than success, is Nature's sign that you have done something which your mind or body needed. This remains true in principle, despite the fact that as a consequence of early false impressions and emotional distortions your idea of what you need may be badly mistaken. But not less important is the fact that as a human being you have an instinctive desire for *more* pleasure than would satisfy your minimal needs. This *surplus* of pleasure-urge or pleasure-craving—which is the source of normal ambition—is, in fact, the basis upon which man's pre-eminence over his fellow creatures rests. Let a tiger have his cave, his mate, and his kill, and he will sleep until he begins to feel cold, ruttish, or hungry again. But a man not only kills his food, he cooks it, seasons it, and is ever seeking new ways to get more enjoyment as well as more nourishment from it. So far as conditions permit, civilized man combs the earth for luxuries of diet, and if business-men encourage this trend out

of the desire for profit, that desire also expresses, among other things, *their* wish for more and more of the pleasures they think money will buy

Indeed, for all the reproaches of the moralists, the "pleasure madness" of which as a people we Americans are so often accused has in many ways accounted for our world leadership in wealth, in business, and in technical progress. It ought not to be forgotten that during the great depression of the 1930s the so-called amusement interests and luxury trades (movies, radio, automobiles, and the like) were among the last to feel the pinch of hard times and the first to lead the way out of them. The question of how far advertising is a social asset may be arguable, but there is no question that contemporary business depends on it, and that one of its main functions is to stimulate the public's wish for novel and ever more costly forms of pleasure. The fact that almost the surest way to become rich and famous is to give your neighbours pleasure may be further seen from the reported salaries of the movie stars and their employers.

At the same time, business progress certainly is not the only or the most important product of man's surplus urge for pleasure. Art, for instance, represents primarily a sublimation of frustrated urges, but I doubt whether there has often been a really great painter, writer, or composer who did not also find supreme delight in his creative labours. It is the fact that he finds pleasure—or, as he would probably prefer to call it, satisfaction—in attaining knowledge that has spurred the scientist to his achievements and made money relatively unimportant to him, and even religious mystics promise the initiate "ecstasies" unknown to the outsider. In whichever of these channels your surplus desire for pleasures—that is, your ambition—is directed, if its goals are natural and realistic, it will make you both a happier and a more useful person.

Secondary Satisfaction

Yet business success, scientific progress, and artistic achievement are all, strictly speaking, secondary pleasures, and while they enhance immeasurably the delight you may find in life's primary satisfactions, they do not and never can replace these. The primary pleasures, based on needs which *must* be satisfied

before you can be happy, are those of sex in the broad sense in which we have been using that word, and of self-esteem or self-approval, such as brings the "peace of mind" which Dr. Liebman describes. To use what I have called secondary pleasures as a substitute for primary ones is like trying to satisfy a hearty appetite with dessert, or with food which tastes well but has no vitamin content. I remember once encountering in a smoking-car a man who told me, "It's not hard to make a million dollars—I did. All you have to do is *give up everything else*." And it probably will not surprise you that his answer to my natural question as to whether he had found it worth while was a vigorous, "Hell, no!" But what he undoubtedly had failed to realize was that his choice of a million dollars at the cost of "everything else" was the product of unconscious fears or inhibitions which kept him from seeking in the first place the primary pleasures upon which he had learned too late that happiness and peace of mind depend.

Still another man of great wealth complained: "It's got to the point where I cannot be sure that anybody loves me except for my money, not even my own wife"—and again what he did not know was that it was probably an unconscious fear that he did not deserve to be loved which had led him to amass his fortune as a compensation.

Dangers of Substitution

The trouble with using secondary pleasures as a substitute for primary ones is, of course, that the temporary success of the substitution masks an ever-deepening inner frustration. And the result of frustration is invariably aggression and hostility, directed against others or oneself. To take the extreme case, the most dangerous type of ambition, both to its possessor and to others, is that in which power of some secondary type is sought as a substitute for sexual potency and for the capacity to get primary pleasure which depends upon this. Conscious or unconscious fear of impotence—known to psychiatrists as the "castration complex"—is immeasurably more widespread and deeply influential as a force in human motives than the average person dreams of.

Harold B. under analysis recalled a story from his childhood

which was less unusual than you may think. One day when he was about five years old his mother noticed he was "playing with himself." Brandishing the scissors from her sewing basket, she announced in stern tones, "If I ever see you doing that again, I'll cut it off!" One incident like this could not have conditioned Harold's whole life, although it did give him an entirely conscious fear of scissors which made it an ordeal for him, even in his forties, to go to the barber for a haircut. (Incidentally, barbers have told me that this "scissors phobia" is not uncommon.) On the other hand, the attitude of both of Harold's parents built up in his mind an intense fear of pleasure, and especially sex pleasure, and this, in turn, gave him a persistent if unconscious dread of being deprived of the organ which to boys and girls alike becomes the symbol of the power to get pleasure when one wants it. (It should perhaps be explained that the "castration complex" does not refer to the form of surgery which creates eunuchs, since the average child has no idea of the function of the testes; what a boy fears, and unconsciously may always be afraid of is that something will deprive him of his penis.)

In Harold's case the effect of his fears for his manhood was an insatiable desire to achieve power and importance in some field free from his parents' sexual *tabus*. His ambition took the form of a determination to become the greatest living violoncellist. He neglected his health, ignored family ties, and subjected his wife to unnecessary poverty because he was interested in nothing but his music. So far as his playing was concerned, he was a *succes d'estime*. Both his teachers and a sprinkling of critics who have heard him play in private agree that he has few rivals and probably no superiors as a performer. But he remains relatively unknown because in the first place he refuses to make even trivial concessions to the public taste, and besides that, is so utterly incapable of "putting himself forward" that he will not seek engagements, in fact, more often shuns them. Unfortunately, as he has admitted, the unconscious purpose of his struggles was to "make a fool of my old man" by becoming more important (i.e. more of a man) than he had been, and so much guilt still attaches to this aim that Harold flinches when faced with its attainment, even though his father died a long time ago.

Reacting to Impotence

Harold was not physically impotent, although he did at times have sexual difficulties, especially in connection with a partner who, he felt, threatened to dominate him and deprive him of initiative; but partial or complete impotence is a basic element in the neurotic background of most cases of inordinate ambition, especially when this is directed toward obtaining power through wealth or public office. Naturally there are no official figures on the subject, but I happen to have known enough outstandingly successful business-men who were incapable of normal sex life to believe there is a real connection between impotence and the so-called will to power. No one knows the actual facts of Adolf Hitler's sex life, but all that we do know suggests that he suffered from "psychological impotence" (sexual incapacity based on fear and emotional conflicts) and that his lust for world conquest represented an attempt to make up for this most intolerable form of weakness. Such a man occasionally finds one woman with whom, for some special reason, he can achieve a degree of manhood, and may stick to her, as Hitler did to Eva Braun, with an irrational devotion, but this usually happens too late to undo the pattern of a lifetime.

Vindicating Yourself

Still another basis of inordinate ambition is the need to vindicate oneself against the remembered accusations of censorious parents by proving that after all one can be worthy to be loved or can "amount to something." For the self-esteem a normal child derives from knowing that his parents love and approve of him is another primary pleasure of which none of us can be deprived without unhappy consequences. Of course, lack of self-esteem may lead to results of considerable social value. many men and women who are driven by an overwhelming urge to "save the world" make useful contributions to its progress even though their real, unconscious motive is to save themselves from their own feelings of guilt. I know now that my choice of the ministry as a profession was essentially an effort to prove to my mother that I was the "good boy" her Puritan conscience never had allowed her to admit believing I was. And I dare say the intense drive for personal sanctity

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which one may see in religious devotees has the same sort of unconscious meaning for them, since the desire for divine approval is a fairly unmistakable equivalent of the urge to "prove oneself" to one's parents

The main catch in this kind of ambition is that it still carries with it the unconscious hostile feelings which frustration always creates; and while these are often mainly taken out upon the person himself, they may also find an outlet in the effort to "reform" his neighbours against their will, and at the cost of their lives, if necessary. We may see this in the history of the Inquisition as well as in the willingness of the Prohibitionists to have "scofflaws" imbibe poison liquor if they still insisted upon drinking; while the eagerness of the religious celibate to rob others of their sexual pleasures, or make sure that they do not enjoy these without paying for it, is as strong to-day as ever.

In its milder forms the need to compensate for lack of natural self-esteem may appear in the form of inordinate desire for fame or public admiration. It may lead you to plan your life on the basis of "what people will think," to wear clothes you dislike because they are fashionable, and to go places where you are bored and uncomfortable so as to be "seen there." Or, again, it may spur you relentlessly against your real wishes to try to "get on in the world" at all costs, even though you would be happier and more comfortable if you could allow yourself to "take life easy."

Competition

A still deeper reason for being afraid to do this is the feeling that you must "keep up with the procession" or, colloquially, "with the Joneses." For if the importance of success is the first article of the American credo, the second is the belief that all life is a competition in which it is a disgrace to be beaten. From his earliest schooldays a boy, especially, is taught that the way to prove his worth is to "beat" somebody at something, and soon learns to venerate a "champion"—even a champion hog-caller—as the people of an earlier day did a saint or monarch. As he grows up, the sports pages of the newspapers confirm this attitude, often with the result that winning becomes so all-important even in the sports in which he takes part that

a game of any kind brings him excitement and tension more than it does relaxation

Still more serious are the effects of carrying the same attitude into the work by which we earn our living. For though "competition is the life of trade," it also is quite literally the *death* of many "traders"—a fact of which one proof is that the modern man's "expectancy of life" is now five years less than that of a woman. Yet although at heart he knows this, the ambitious businessman is driven by his compulsions and afraid to let up even for a moment.

Dynamic psychologists such as Dr. Franz Alexander point out that the natural time for competition is in adolescence, where beating a person of one's own age tends to counteract the feelings of inadequacy aroused by the thought of entering the adult world. Young Tom finds it hard to believe that he will ever learn to run a business the way Dad does, but can bolster up his confidence in himself by winning a swimming meet. But when Tom gets a job, the idea that someone he defeated in the swimming pool might earn a bigger salary than he does may make his former victories seem empty, and his wife, who has by now become infected with the fever, makes him feel it shameful if some other girl is better dressed than she is. So poor Tom represses his desire to enjoy life—all the more because he still secretly feels pleasure is sinful—and keeps up what he begins to call the "rat race" until his repressions, not the hard work he has done, bring on a "nervous breakdown." For a nervous breakdown is unconsciously a "sit-down strike" by the part of us which no longer can stand being deprived of primary childish pleasures and so puts us in a situation in which even our consciences can demand no more of us and all we can do is relax and be taken care of.

Afraid to Win

But repression and the revolt of our repressed cravings are not the only dangers of too strong competitive ambition, even in the sports field. An unconscious sense of guilt may also create trouble for us. For to start with, every contest is to some extent a symbolic battle in which the defeat of your opponent means destroying him before he can destroy you, and can carry with

it much of the unconscious guilt our minds associate with murder. I know several men, for instance, more or less like Robert H., a first-rate tennis player, who somehow is always beaten in the finals or the semi-finals of whatever tournament he enters. Robert now knows, and is working to apply that knowledge, that whenever he seems to be winning an important game he suddenly begins to "get scared" and "let up on" his opponent till he himself ends in defeat. And he realizes that the reason for this is that his hostility toward anyone who stands in the situation of a rival is so intense that he does not dare release it even in as harmless a form as by beating him at tennis. The stronger anyone's aggressive impulses and the more sternly repressed they are, the more likely he will be to have this otherwise strange inhibition.

Again, competition, especially in the field of business, means a kind of isolation in which each man works for himself and has no other person to depend on. When a man has grown up childishly dependent, especially on his mother—as so many American men do nowadays—he is likely to find such a situation more than his unconscious yearnings can bear, and perhaps develop stomach ulcers, which are now quite generally recognized as owing mainly to emotional disturbance. The actual picture of what happens in such cases, as the specialists in psychosomatic medicine describe it, is that the craving for somebody like a mother to depend on expresses itself physically in a continuous neurotic hunger, which in turn creates a flow of the digestive juices, even though there is nothing for them to work on. The result, as it has been picturesquely put, is that "the stomach winds up by digesting itself." Whether this is literally true or not, it is at least significant that one treatment which has proved effective in such cases is a device which supplies the stomach of the gastric-ulcer patient with small but unceasing supplies of—*milk*!

Stop and think a minute! Does the fact that you can eat steak while the man you have outstripped still eats hamburger really make your steak taste any better? Or is his hamburger really spoiled by his knowing it is not steak? Or, as far as that goes, does the fact that you have proved yourself smarter than he is make you any more intelligent than you *are*? It is what you *are* and *have* that matters, not how it compares with other things

or people, and the more completely you grow up emotionally, the more clearly you will realize this I do not deny there is an element of competition in life or that it can be important, but its main importance usually grows out of a "fixation" on some special form of satisfaction—some one girl or one job—which is seldom as unique as you think, and most of the time your interests have more in common with those of your supposed competitors than you realize. The new methods of the trade associations and professional societies are based on the fact that if you are an engineer, it is more important for you to build up the public's confidence in engineering than to prove your firm is better than the other fellow's

Too Ambitious Parents

In its own way, the most cruel and unjustifiable manifestation of ambition is the all-too-common effort to satisfy it through our children. The parent who says he is determined that his child shall be "better off than I was" may be voicing a real affection, but if he is mainly concerned that the child be a success in fields where he himself has been defeated and a failure, the child's interests are the last things that really concern him. The successful actress, for example, may be gratifying her own natural urge for pleasure, but many an unsuccessful or semi-successful aspirant for dramatic honours is, in fact, striving vicariously to achieve what her mother has always wanted and has never attained for herself. Some of the most unhappy women I know were forced on the stage by the relentless urgings of their mothers, and stay there because they know no other way to make a living, or would be "ashamed to quit at this point," though in fact they will confess that they would rather have got married, settled down, and "been like other people."

The harm you may do a child by conditioning him to feel he *must* be a success and "amount to something" was described some years ago by Dr. Mandel Sherman of Chicago University in an interview he gave to a newspaper

"The natural result of such exhortations is a tragedy, like that of the poem *Excelsior*. Stripped of the poetic glamour, the young hero of that silly adventure is just a plain 'nut,'

who thought he had to be 'somebody,' and that carrying a banner up an Alpine mountain, freezing to death, and being buried at public expense, was a grand idea. . . . To convince a person that he must do what he can't do is to convince him of his worthlessness. He becomes a worthless character, a tramp, criminal, or crank, according to his temperament. If the sense of guilt and failure is unbearable, his mind may retreat from an impossible world into the refuge of insanity. The damage is usually done in childhood."

Will Ambition make You Happy?

There are ways in which you can determine whether your ambition—if you are ambitious—is likely to end by making you happy or miserable. To begin with, it will certainly not make you happy if it involves your giving up the effort to attain what I have called the primary pleasures of life. But if you have your share of these, and beyond that get a kick out of your job or your career; if you can enjoy such success as you already have achieved without feeling bitter or resentful because it has not been greater; if doing a piece of work well gives you the same sort of sense of fulfilment that comes from begetting or conceiving a child, your "drive" is a mental and practical asset for which you may properly be thankful. On the other hand, if you feel guilty because you seem to yourself to be "unambitious," don't imagine this means you are weak or lazy; you are sick, in mind or body, so that the urge to succeed which you were born with cannot function. And the causes of your illness—usually fears or inhibitions—can now be identified and relieved. In so far as there is any truly normal—which, as we have seen, means happy—person, he will certainly never be satisfied to stand still, but with no sense of fatigue or tension will proceed to make himself each day a little wiser, more efficient, and in the end more successful than before.

It is a somewhat curious fact that, so far as my observation has gone, people who have been successfully psychoanalysed almost invariably end by making more money and more rapid business or professional progress than they had done before. I recall one young man, for example, whose main conscious problem when he first came to be analysed was that he could

not hold a job. The unconscious reason for this proved to be resentment at the fact that what he believed to be the "imaginary" illness of his father had forced him to go to work instead of getting the college education to which he had always looked forward. Without knowing it, he had been deliberately getting himself "fired" as a method of expressing his dislike of having to support his parents at an age when he thought they should support him. His analysis was naturally directed toward helping him see how unrealistic and opposed to his own long-range interests this attitude had been, but he neither was reproached for being unambitious nor urged to try to succeed in life. The event proved that such urging was unnecessary, and he is now the head of a flourishing business. But even without analysis it is, on the whole, the relatively "well-adjusted" people who achieve at least a moderate degree of success. For in fact success is a by-product of happiness rather than the source of happiness so many people believe it to be. And as far as you, my reader, are concerned, there will be time enough to think of seeking fame and fortune after you have learned to enjoy living "as things are"—or anyhow as you can make them if you have enough courage and insight.

Equally important—though again this is no novel idea—is the fact that success is not something which can be achieved once and for all, leaving you free to "sit back and enjoy it," for the law of Nature is that anything that ceases to grow, dies. No matter how long you live, new pleasures and new goals will always lie ahead of you if you are willing to work for them, and work you do in this spirit will not wear you out or shorten your life. Nothing but your own fears, or the inhibitions that a morbid conscience puts in your way, can effectively forbid you to keep going—and keep growing.

CHAPTER IX

RELAXATION AND "ESCAPE"

I HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN of the danger of trying to be too rigidly consistent in view of the mixture of conflicting needs and desires that is human nature. Yet the sense of insecurity that follows deviation from rules we have once adopted can drive even people who believe themselves emancipated from "old ideas" to set up a new regimentation, and condemn in what amount to moral terms the slightest deviation from it in themselves or others. A good illustration is the way some people use the word "escapist" to condemn activities which their persisting puritanic consciences reject as too simply and shamelessly pleasurable.

The criterion of emotional adulthood is willingness to face reality, but that does not mean that this is a "duty" or that you should scold yourself for taking even an hour's vacation from it. The one valid reason for facing reality—which I admit is sometimes a painful process—is that it is in your interest to do so because in the long run your safety and happiness depend upon it. And conversely, the worst that can be said of trying to escape reality is that it may expose you to unnecessary dangers or lead you to waste your energies in chasing will-o'-the-wisps.

But in any case, before you grit your teeth and try to nerve yourself for an ordeal, make sure it is reality that you are facing, not some product of a guilt-ridden imagination. For because all that we know of reality comes through the impressions we receive from the external world, and because it is from our misunderstanding of these same impressions that we gained the sense of guilt most of us carry in the back of our minds, what "facing reality" is apt to mean to many people is admitting that they ought to be ashamed of themselves, if not that no punishment could be too severe for their violation of the moral standards their parents imposed upon them.

Mr. R., a prominent business-man, philanthropist, and pillar

of the church, once said to me with deep emotion: "I suppose that anyone who faced the naked truth about himself would go mad." People who had had business dealings with Mr. R. said that he drove a hard bargain, and some of his employees referred to him behind his back as Simon Legree. But I do not think the sense of guilt that inspired his remark was based on anything as real as these shortcomings, which he probably would have considered more a credit than a disgrace. Since I did not analyse him (though I knew him well for many years), I cannot, of course, say positively how he got his feeling of his own appalling sinfulness, but I believe I can make a fairly good guess. He had been raised "in the fear of God" by stern, uncompromising parents who had dominated his life up to his forties, and I do not think it would have been psychologically possible for him not to have hated both of them with a deep and bitter hatred, which he would have felt to be so hideously wicked that he never could have let himself be conscious of it. But, as usually happens, while he had been able to suppress the hatred, the guilt its existence aroused had been too strong to be wholly satisfied even by a life of piety and good works. He still felt himself a miserable sinner but did not dare to recognize what his sin was. If he had been able to see that his hostile feelings toward his parents were as natural and inevitable as breathing, he could have faced their "reality" quite calmly.

The Reality We cannot Face

I do not deny that there are aspects of reality which are appalling, especially from a childish standpoint. But most of the time, if the idea of facing reality fills us with terror, it is because of the unreal meanings with which guilt makes us invest it. Take death as the ultimate example. You may call it the most painful of realities, yet since none of us has actually experienced it, the way we feel about facing it depends entirely on the conscious and unconscious associations it has for our minds. There are people to whom death means being "brought to judgment," and the more intense their sense of sin, the deeper the terror which the thought of death arouses. There are people—I have known several of them—who associate death mainly with

burial and are filled with claustrophobic horror at the thought of being "shut up in the ground." There are people to whom it means being deprived of further pleasure and in whom it thus arouses the castration complex. And one meets occasionally men and women to whom death still means primarily release from pain and sorrow and transition to the better world on which their hopes have centred. The one thing death does not mean to anyone is what it may actually be—the end of our individual existence—since this is one concept which our minds appear to be incapable of entertaining. Death is thus the one reality which we cannot face and which, apart from providing for the future of our loved ones, there is no use in our thinking about at all.

But what about facing the realities—especially the painful and unpleasant ones—of our own and other people's everyday existence? This may or may not always be necessary and in certain situations serves no useful purpose at all

Useless "Realism"

In the fields of art and literature for a long time there has been a school of alleged "realism" which has served mainly to justify preoccupation with themes in which readers previously had been ashamed to admit being interested. Chief among these, of course, is sex in its more intimate details, as described by a whole school of novelists from Emile Zola onward. But of late the "realistic" school has turned to still more childish if quite natural human interests. Not so long ago a well-known artist showed me with considerable pride his latest landscape—a depiction of part of a country village, in the foreground of which was an old-fashioned privy. Now I well remember how much I was fascinated at the age of perhaps six by the sights—and smells—of the first object of this type I encountered, and the huge under-the-counter sale of *The Specialist* shows how many people there are who still feel the same way. But I submit I am not attempting to escape reality if at my age I would rather see a painting of a pine grove.

So far as I can see, the only healthy-minded reason for wanting to read about, or see pictures of, anything is that it *attracts* you

by appealing to your conscious or unconscious interests and desires. Even the "purely scientific" study of a subject like murder or perversion is not wholly an exception, since the scientist can choose the fields that he will work in. But this is not meant as a reproach, since from my standpoint nearly everyone has secret traces of childish preoccupations with such matters which he can legitimately "sublimate" by investigating them in ways that have social value

On the other hand, a school has recently arisen in both art and literature which claims it seeks to arouse the "social conscience" of the public by detailed description of the sordid and painful conditions under which a large part of mankind still lives; and exponents of this school—of which James T. Farrell's *Studs Lonigan* saga is a fair example—are wont to decry as "escapist" any literary or artistic work which is content to give pleasure rather than to inflict the pain from which they feel their fellow humans ought to suffer. I do not deny that "socially conscious" works of art have in some cases helped advance the reforms which their creators advocated, but I am afraid that in the majority of cases reading about other people's sufferings and working oneself up into a glow of pity at their hard lot are substitutes for effective action rather than incentives to it. For by making ourselves miserable we feel that we can atone for being better off than other people without the unpleasant necessity of giving up our own superior position

Nature makes Us "Escape"

There is still another point which is forgotten by those who urge us to face reality because secretly they feel that anything which is unpleasant must be good for us; *no one can or should be "realistic" twenty-four hours a day!* Nature itself has stressed this rule by demanding that we spend a third of our lives in sleep—a condition in which all reality ceases to exist for us, and everything that goes on in our minds is undiluted wishful thinking. (The fact that dreams, as Freud first discovered, are a form of "wish-fulfilment" will be discussed later.) And again, in so far as reality involves the need of labour, it is coming to be realized with increasing clearness that we cannot profitably devote more

than perhaps eight of our waking hours to hard work, either physical or mental, and that beyond this point we are simply punishing ourselves to no useful purpose.

One field in which the traditional belief that the more hours of hard work you put in each day the faster you will progress is now coming to be recognized as particularly unsound, is that of music. As a boy I had a fellow student of the violin whose parents were especially devoted to this idea. While I managed to make reasonable progress on the basis of an hour's practice each day, poor Emil spent eight hours with his fiddle, six days a week, getting in whatever schooling he had—which was not much, since at that time the province of Quebec did not have compulsory education—at odd moments. In time Emil gained considerable technical proficiency, and was accepted as a pupil by a famous violin teacher. But although he must by now be in his fifties, Emil never has “got anywhere,” and probably never will. Any “spark” of genius—or even of talent—he may have possessed has been quenched beyond revival, not alone by the hard work, but by his inner and perhaps unconscious revolt at being forced to live so joyless an existence.

Later, when I myself went to a great teacher, I encountered what I now see was a vastly more enlightened viewpoint. For this man of vision, Otto Roth, said even forty years ago that no one should attempt to practise the violin for more than four half-hours a day, because, as he put it. “You play with your mind, not with your fingers, and after your mind gets tired and begins to wander, all you do is practise mistakes.”

There are many occupations—of which even writing is one—which do not require the same intensity of concentration as playing the violin, and at which one can work profitably for more than two hours a day. But there is no virtue in hard work or self-denial as such, and the man or woman who “cannot stop working” is unconsciously much more concerned with punishing himself than with getting anything really worth while accomplished. I am not denying that work itself can be pleasurable—it ranks high among what I have called the “secondary pleasures”; but the fact that nobody can live on work alone, and that all work and no play not only makes Jack a dull boy but eventually a sick one is just as much a reality as that most of us must do some work if we are to keep on living.

Where Escape Leads

But if we do and occasionally should escape *from* reality, what do we escape *to*? Effective escape involves what dynamic psychology calls "regression"—going back so far as our emotions, and to some extent our actions are concerned, to childhood. For it is in healthy, normal childhood that the pressure of reality is lightest. All games are or should be childish, since they represent attempts to get a feeling of achievement or superiority without the tension that is always present in the tasks we do to earn a living. On the other hand, escape can go too far if we forget that we are playing and start taking the game really seriously. For then we begin to attach values to success or failure which run counter to the hard facts of existence. To make a game our profession is another matter—the big-league ball-player who hits a home run has done something that helps pay the rent bill. But the amateur who ignores business because he prefers being successful on the golf-course to being a failure in the office has carried escaping past the point of harmlessness or even safety. And, of course, the same is more or less true of the "good times" which make you forget the job you have to do next morning, although there are cases in which the release of tension that a mild "binge" brings you may be more helpful than a night's sleep.

Many love affairs involve a tragically childish effort to escape realities which prove disastrous when we finally are forced to face them. Nothing, certainly, could have been farther from John K.'s intentions than to wreck a girl's life—least of all that of a girl whom he was honestly in love with. When John realized that his feeling for his pretty secretary, twenty years his junior, was more than paternal interest, he at first fought manfully against it, and would probably never have put it into words if Myra had not hinted pretty broadly that she felt the same way. John and his wife had been estranged for several years as a result of a quarrel which both were too proud to make up, so that in the first glow of his new-found passion John could easily persuade himself that he would get a divorce and marry Myra "when the time came." On this basis they began the usual routine of clandestine romance, and at first were "happier than they had ever dreamed they could be." But as time passed

John became more and more conscious of the fact that his ambition to become a judge, which was the great aim of his life, could not be realized if he went through with the divorce proceedings he had planned. For one reason or another—at first consciously sincere, but less and less so as time went on—John postponed the break he had led Myra to rely on, and when, after years, she summoned up the courage to insist that he must either free himself to marry her or end their relationship, he shamefacedly bade her goodbye, with no idea that she had already planned, if this should happen, to end her life. Had John in the beginning faced the simple reality that you cannot have your cake and eat it too, three lives (since John's wife knew the situation) would not have been ruined.

No matter what form it may take, all regression involves the revival of one or both of two childish attitudes of mind: belief in the power of the "magic wish" and the no less childish feeling of security that comes from the belief that we are somehow being taken care of and that nothing very bad can happen to us—a belief which in the case of games that are expressions of aggressive impulses, such as football, may lead young men to risk actual danger beyond what their greatest "triumphs" are worth from a realistic standpoint.

The Rhythm of Life

But, as I said, in the sort of world we live in some sort of escape seems periodically necessary for most of us. For the normal "rhythm of life" seems to consist in alternating states of moving forward and back, and this does no harm provided the rate of progress over any given period exceeds that of regression. At the same time, regression is really safe only when you recognize what you are doing—for example, when you realize that you are playing a game, and so do not take the game too seriously. I have seen this principle used with apparent success in connection with the ancient problem of the small child and the Santa Claus myth. For example, when asked, "Is there really a Santa Claus?" I have sometimes answered, "No, but it's fun to pretend there is, so let's go on pretending." The real and grave danger of regression or escape comes when we not only let ourselves

ignore reality for the time being, but begin to deny that it exists and substitute illusion for it. Certainly a person suffering from some serious disease such as cancer will do well to "keep his mind off it" as much as his sufferings will let him, but to deny that he *has* the disease at all, and thus ignore the need for treatment, may prove fatal. Of course, the same is no less true of serious emotional disturbances or conflicts; there is no point in continually dwelling on them if we can help it, but to refuse to admit they exist, or that we need treatment for them, may disable us for useful, let alone for happy, living.

No one knows how many men and women have died long before their time because they dared not face the possibility that a familiar pain might mean something more serious than, say, chronic indigestion. But if the reality of physical disease is hard to face, that of mental illness is still more so. When Doris N. came back from a hospital after what the neighbours were told was a "nervous breakdown," I used all my power of persuasion to prevent her going back to living with her mother. I suspected Doris had been sicker than her relatives admitted, and I knew how sternly she had been attempting to repress her feelings of hostility toward a person who, as she said, "always got the better of me somehow as far back as I can remember." For that matter, Mrs N was, among other things, the sort of mother who, professing her own deep devotion, requires unmixd love and admiration from her children, and made Doris feel that even to be angry with her was unpardonable. Doris, who was more than thirty and quite capable of living alone, yielded to her mother's plea and went back to her. But, as I had foreseen, in two or three months her repressions broke down and she tried first to strangle her mother, and then to take poison. She is now what the law calls incurably insane.

Are Your "Rights" an Escape?

Strange as it may sound, belief in your "rights" may involve a dangerous escape from reality, though it also may work in the opposite direction. From one standpoint, the revulsion with which most of us hear it said that "might makes right" grows out of fear of having to admit how much truth there is in the

assertion. We grow up with various but definite ideas of what we "have a right to," but the harsh fact is, these remain no more than ideas except as we are able to persuade or force our neighbours to accept them. Psychologically speaking, my "rights" are those of the things I want which conscience will permit me to demand from others, and to take by force, if necessary. But while it may ease my mind to feel that I am justified in suing someone for money he owes me, that belief will do me no good if my debtor is without funds, or if the courts will not make him pay me. In reality, no right that anyone lays claim to is of the least value *if he does not have the power to enforce it*. And to comfort ourselves with the thought that right is somehow automatically self-enforcing is like thinking that because our country's cause is just, it will win wars, regardless of whether its men have been trained to fight or given arms to fight with. The belief that they are fighting in a just cause will indeed make men fight better, just as confidence in your rights may help you to seek them with fewer mental reservations, but *power plus skill* will in the long run turn the balance.

A girl in her late teens once said to me that she felt sure she would have a lot of good luck some day because she had been so unhappy up to that time. She based her belief on what she called "the law of compensation," and one could not wonder that it seemed fair to her that some force should somehow make up to her for her rigid and fear-ridden childhood. It was both hard and unpleasant to get her to see that if she ever was to gain the happiness she wanted it must be by her own efforts, and that even these were handicapped by the bitterness and self-pity her early experiences had instilled in her mind. Yet, without this insight, she would unconsciously have refused any chance for happiness life might have brought her because to be happy would have meant giving up her grudges against Fate and her parents and accepting the responsibility for finding her own satisfactions. All this her belief in her rights—or the "law of compensation"—was allowing her to escape facing.

Religion

Actually, as the Founding Fathers of our country realized, the one reasonable basis for belief in any rights whatever is to

think of them as representing something with which man is "endowed by his Creator" And this in turn leads us to the question of whether or how far that belief—in other words, religion—is the "escape from reality" that many modern critics call it.

One fact cannot well be questioned: Religion, whatever else it is, is a regression to emotions and attitudes typical of childhood Jesus himself said: "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," and in many faiths the clergy are called frankly "Father" The essential thesis of religion as most of us know it is that we all have a Heavenly Father who will take care of us if we reverence Him and obey His commands And this is no less true, despite the wide difference of opinion as to just what His commands are, or where we should look to learn them No matter how much we might prefer it otherwise, we should be unrealistic to deny, not only that most of our fellow men accept this idea, but that the mere thought of being "fatherless" is so appalling to them that if they are deprived of one all-powerful and all-wise parent, they will soon adopt another One may balk at certain aspects of the Christian God but one cannot deny that it is better to live with His "children" than the spiritual progeny of Marx or Hitler.

Again "faith in God" has a pragmatic value for those who can achieve or retain it I know an experienced and able aviator who says that he "wouldn't have the nerve to take a ship up if he did not feel that Somebody was looking out for him away off up there" And as long as this does not make him relax his vigilance or take unnecessary chances, it would be no favour to rob him of his conviction The same element of the as yet unknown which we discussed in talking about luck is something before which we remain helpless, and if we can "trust" this to a power which we believe means well toward us, so much the better for our peace of mind, and consequently for our freedom to seek happiness in those fields where it can be won by our own efforts.

But the realist will also recognize that the actual Supreme Being differs from a child's idea of father in at least two vital respects He will play no favourites for any reason whatsoever, and He will not save us from the consequences of our blunders

merely because they were made with "good intentions" or in deference to what we thought were His commands. If we starve ourselves of pleasure out of the mistaken idea that He wills it, we shall pay for it in misery and mental illness. And if we persuade ourselves it is our duty to make the lives of our children joyless, they will hate us, even though we frighten them into repressing their resentment.

Dangers

The chief danger of religion in fact—and it is a very real one—is that once we make our idea of "the will of God" a substitute for individual reason and conscience, the result may be to release inhibitions which would otherwise have held unconscious instincts in check, and so let us give rein to impulses which we should otherwise have been ashamed of. Both in personal life and in international relations the most savage cruelties have nearly always been those practised in the name of religion, from the Inquisition down through present-day religions such as Fascism and Communism. And however false their dogmas may seem to a Christian, Communism and Fascism *are* religions psychologically.

The idea that religion may cause mental illness is true only in a secondary sense, although religion may tend to intensify the sense of guilt that underlies most mental ailments. For while what we call insanity frequently takes the form of extreme piety or penitence—as everybody who has visited a mental hospital knows—the same patients probably would have been no less ill in the long run if they had been brought up with no faith whatever. I once asked the young son of "emancipated" Jewish parents whether he believed in God. He answered, I think sincerely: "I don't know; I never really thought about it." And yet though he was as free as anybody could be from the type of fear religion often inspires, he had as intense a sense of guilt as if his family had been devout church members. For, of course, the real source of guilt is defiance of one's parents, and becomes "the fear of God" only in so far as it is transferred from them to the "Heavenly Father."

Whether an emotionally mature person can or should abandon the idea of such a "father" is something each of us must decide.

for himself. Many psychologists and psychiatrists have retained their religious beliefs, and none of them would deliberately seek to undermine the faith of others. Several eminent psychiatrists are Roman Catholics and not a few others remain members of Jewish or Protestant congregations. All, I think, would agree that even if religion is in some sense an escape, whatever danger lies in it depends upon the use made of it. For my own part, if religion stimulates a man to recognize the brotherhood of mankind and the fact that all men's deepest interests are in harmony, I say, "More power to it!"

Day-dreaming and Fantasy

Closely allied with religion but even more universal is fantasy building or day-dreaming. Everyone discovers this way of escaping his fears and frustrations in earliest childhood and inevitably practises it to some extent forever after. The only harm in fantasy is that it can acquire so great a fascination for us that we use it as a substitute for fact, not as a temporary relief from the unpleasantness of real life. Because the function of day-dreaming is to compensate us for our failure to obtain real-life satisfactions, the less satisfying we find everyday existence, the more dangerously attractive we shall find our dream world. People who are reasonably happy need not fear to indulge in day-dreaming, and indeed may find it useful, if it spurs them to work to make their dreams come true. But deeply unhappy people should regard a preference for "the world of shadows" (as a patient of mine calls it) as a danger signal, since one can say very literally of habitual day-dreaming coupled with retreat from the real world. "That way madness lies."

But while all of us indulge in fantasy to some extent, whatever our age, we are apt, as we grow older, to lose the power to create our own dreams and become to some degree dependent on the dreams of others. As has already been noted, the artist succeeds through helping people to enjoy vicariously the fantasies which their fears or sense of the ridiculous forbid them to build for themselves. The enormous success of the motion-picture industry is primarily a proof of how deeply dissatisfied most people to-day are, and how willing they are to suspend their critical faculty in order to live in a dream world which their

own imaginations are too feeble to create. And if, as some frightened moralists proclaim, the movies present an exaggerated picture of the importance of sex, that is owing not to "degeneracy," but to the profound starvation of the sexual impulse—on the qualitative rather than the quantitative level—from which the majority of people to-day suffer.

Humour

One of the most interesting and effective of escapes—which also may involve profound reality—is *humour*. For what humour mainly helps us to escape from is guilt, and this, as a rule, is basically unreal, however real it may seem to its victims. The command, "When you say that, smile!" expresses the idea that treating something as a joke denies or lessens the offence behind it, and most humour has that purpose. A man who would hesitate to propose any other form of sexual intimacy to a woman may escape the charge of impropriety by telling her *risqué* stories—and perhaps judge by her response how she would react to further advances. In the same way, themes that would be rigorously censored in a play or picture that ventures to treat them seriously may "get by" in comedy with little difficulty. And whoever has attended church conventions knows how ministers love to evade the guilt of treating sacred subjects lightly by joking about Biblical incidents or the foibles of their congregations. Psychologically, smiles and laughter are expressions of the pleasure we feel at relief from tension, and the tension from which humour has released us is that of the fear of guilt aroused by people or emotions it assures us we need not take quite so seriously. One sign that a psychoanalytic patient has begun to make real progress is that he starts laughing at his former "silly notions." In fact, humour does harm only when it is used as a mask for cruelty or when it becomes a method of repressing actual feelings of rage or self-pity, as in the familiar pattern: "Laugh, clown, laugh!"

The Truth about Alcohol

Still another and far older method of escape is through one form or another of "intoxication" (literally, self-poisoning);

and while other drugs have been and still are employed for this purpose, alcohol is, of course, by far the most used. In this field, again, dynamic psychology has led the way in showing that excessive drinking is not a sin but a symptom, and that the effective way to deal with it is by discovering and removing the cause—usually, unwillingness to face a world the drinker is too childish to have any idea how to deal with, plus a cumulative load of guilt which can be deadened only by ever-increasing dosage. At the same time, while these are the reasons why a man becomes an alcoholic, it is also true that in time the elation and sense of importance which intoxication gives is substituted for more normal pleasures, so that the true alcohol addict has ceased to drink to “forget his troubles” and drinks for no reason but to get drunk. He would not do even this, however, if he had not been robbed earlier in life of the power to find healthier and more adult pleasures, usually by puritanical parents. The number of alcoholics who are the proverbial ministers’ sons, or were brought up in religious households, is much too large to be accidental.

But is all drinking “excessive”—as so many people suppose on the basis of real or imaginary experience with alcoholics? I cannot believe so. Unbiased investigation shows that only one out of every twenty people who drink is likely to become an alcoholic or even a “problem drinker,” and with most such people the conflicts which make them drink would have expressed themselves in other and perhaps worse forms if no alcohol had been available. I hesitate to believe that the common practice of most human beings the world over as far back as there are any records can be wholly without value. As man has developed an ever more complicated and tension-producing way of life, it would seem only natural that he should make use of the discovery of a temporary antidote for tension which at the same time may free him from some of the artificial inhibitions that hinder his quest for pleasure. And of course—unconsciously, at least—it is the fact that drinking leaves both men and women freer to seek pleasure (even though, ironically, in the sex field it makes them less able to achieve it) that is the real basis of the horror with which drinking is regarded by Puritans the world over.

When to Worry

If you feel a little more uneasy than you like to admit at the fact that you enjoy a cocktail or a highball—or even a glass of beer—here are two things to remember: First, the guiltier you feel over drinking the more dangerous the habit will be for you, since one of the chief attractions of alcohol for most people is its power to anæsthetize their sense of guilt until the “morning after”—when, of course, it comes back with redoubled vigour and starts clamouring for a “pick-up.” I do not think I have ever known an alcoholic who had not been brought up to feel that drinking was “wrong,” and for just that reason if someone you know is a “problem drinker,” the most ineffectual of all ways to cure him is by making him still more ashamed of himself. Second, there’s one fairly simple danger signal anyone who drinks will be wise to look out for: the moment you find that you “must” have a drink in order to do something—like meeting a group of strangers or making a speech—which you cannot do cold sober, look out! You are heading into trouble. Whatever place liquor has in happy living, it is as an aid to relaxation, and to use it as a “crutch” is to risk the disasters recent fiction, such as *The Lost Week-end*, has so forcefully depicted.

I am not sure how far smoking, which has been my “pet vice” for two-thirds of my life, can be called an escape. For while nicotine is technically a narcotic, its soothing effects are scarcely noticeable to the seasoned smoker—anyhow, until he tries to do without it. Mainly, I think, smoking is a case of substituting a comparatively primitive and childish form of pleasure for more adult satisfactions from which lack of opportunity—or inhibition—bars us. Psychologically, sucking a pipe, cigar, or cigarette involves a form of auto-erotism of what we called in a former chapter the “pre-genital type” and, because it touches such deep roots, the habit of smoking is so hard to break that anyone who has to break it will be likely to be sorry that he ever began.

But here, as with any other form of pleasure, the “burden of proof” that it ought not to be indulged in must be put and firmly kept upon whoever tries to ban it. Pleasure in itself is no more an escape than it is an offence against morality or

virtue—it is what we live and grow by. And a given pleasure becomes dangerous only when it is a “compensation” for failure to get one that is more essential and enduring. In short, if you enjoy doing something, make the other fellow—or your long-range sense of your own interests—show you why you should not do it. For if anything is fun, the chances always are that it’s good for you.

CHAPTER X

HOW TO GET ON WITH PEOPLE

ON LEARNING TO GET ON with people, the first fact to bear in mind is that *they want you to like them*, and will like you if they think you do so. Or at least this is true of nine people out of ten—the tenth being what psychiatrists call the “paranoid” type, who is so suspicious and distrustful that he never will believe that anybody really likes him, and so will not let himself feel friendly even toward those who try hardest to befriend him. As Stevenson says in *Virginibus Puerisque*: “The body is a house of many windows. there we all sit, showing ourselves and crying on the passers-by to come and love us.” And if you can recognize that plea behind the fears which make most men and women try to veil it, and can make them feel that you are willing to say “Yes” to their entreaty, you’ll win all the friends you want without much trouble.

Indeed, though I think I “know the worst” of human nature, I am still firmly convinced that friendship and mutual liking are the natural and instinctive relations between human beings, and that the more we are able to cast off our fears and “be ourselves,” the nearer we shall come to a world in which good will among men is the prevailing pattern. There are three main reasons for this.

In the first place, as I have said elsewhere, while the wish for pleasure is the motive power of human behaviour, pleasure in the nature of the case is greater when shared with or given by another person than when it is self-created. Mother’s kisses give a baby a thrill which he cannot get by anything he does to himself, just as the embraces of a loved one are immeasurably more delightful to a normal man or woman than any self-stimulation. Hence the basic fact which underlies human relations is that each of us, if he would satisfy his need of pleasure to the full, *must* find another human being and work out some sort of an adjustment to him or her. The same principle applies

not only to the sublimated forms of sexual pleasure we derive from the affection and goodwill of people we love, but to intellectual or ego-pleasures, such as the exchange of ideas. You might even say that the more special and unusual any person's taste in pleasure is, the greater the satisfaction he will get from finding someone who will share it with him. The joy of the stamp collector or of the bird-watcher in finding a fellow hobbyist is all the keener because such a person is not met on every corner.

Again, it is natural for people to like one another because, unless fear prevents it, their attempts to satisfy their needs and wants are so much more successful when they work or play together. Everyone who has played in a team of any kind will know what I mean, unless he is by nature a "grand-stander," and I can say from my own experience that there are few greater thrills than that of playing with that most perfectly organized and co-ordinated of all teams, a symphony orchestra. True, in this case the conductor gets a greater sense of power than the individual players, and the rank-and-file musician sometimes longs to be in his shoes; but this does not change the fact that the subordination of your individual impulses to the action of a larger group "does something" that makes you feel many times your actual size. For that matter, it is through learning to work together in large business units that we have achieved our world superiority in industry and commerce, and as every business leader knows, the stronger the *esprit de corps* he can arouse in his organization, the more and better work it can accomplish.

Finally, as we saw in a former chapter, an essential factor of the feeling of security without which no human being can be happy is the sense of "belonging," and whoever is unable to achieve that and goes through life thinking of himself as a "lone wolf" will be nearly certain to be either a neurotic or a criminal, if not a little of both. I do not want to discuss the economic virtues or defects of the W P A., but to thousands of more or less "different" or emotionally handicapped men and women who had never felt they "belonged" anywhere, membership in a W.P.A. project brought a sense of security and self-confidence they had not experienced before.

Why no Peace?

But if it is really natural for people to like one another and enjoy working together, why do harmony and peace on earth seem farther away to-day than ever? Or, to get back to your individual problem, if most of the people you meet want to have you like them and will like you if they think you do so, why should any of them be potential enemies—as I cannot deny that some of them may be?

If someone you meet is really as unfriendly as you think, it may be because you seem to him to block or frustrate the attainment of the pleasures he craves. For example, you may have the money or the job he thinks he needs to make him happy, and there seems to be no way of getting either except by taking it away from you. Or, again, he may feel that you feel the same way about him and may rob him of something he values if he is not careful. For in our relations with our neighbours we must recognize that, while few dare to keep the Golden Rule in its original form, practically everyone observes it, as you might say, "in reverse," by expecting other people to treat him as he wants or plans to treat them. I remember a young patient of mine whose interviews were devoted largely to describing how everyone with whom he did business tried to cheat him. And I blame myself more than him for letting him run up quite a large bill which he left town without paying—I should have foreseen that he would treat me in that way from his attitude toward everyone else. In the same way, a man who is always suspecting his wife of unfaithfulness is probably judging her intentions by those he is cherishing (or trying to repress) in his own mind.

If you have a feeling that people in general are "out to do you," that nobody wants to give you a break, or that everyone you meet is criticizing you, you are probably only reflecting your real if unconscious attitude toward them. I'll grant that the sort of person who is taken in by every hypocrite or faker is still living at heart in a childish Eden which is a fool's paradise for adults, but if I were asked the best short way to estimate a person's character, it would be his feeling about other people generally and his idea of how they will treat him if he lets them. I'm not saying that if you find most people hard to get along

with, you are "naturally" hateful and suspicious, but something undoubtedly has happened to you which has planted traces of these feelings in you, and you won't be happy with your neighbours until you outgrow them.

Fear of Self-assertion

If you grow up—as too many people still do—feeling that your parents were determined to prevent your having any fun or getting anything you wanted, you will probably be convinced that there is no way to get even your just rights except by fighting for them. If you have the courage to fight, you'll go around with a chip on your shoulder which everyone else will see and be antagonized by; if you haven't, you may be like a young woman I will call Miss W. She was of superior intelligence, well-educated, and "conscientious to a fault." But for all that she never could get anywhere in business or social life because of her neurotic fear of "putting herself forward." I have even known her to refuse a raise in salary because she was afraid that her employer might consider it presumptuous of her to value her work so highly, while applying for a new position was such an ordeal that she would put it off until she was practically starving.

With Miss W. the effect of having had a harsh and domineering father had been strengthened by the fact that in her childhood home there was never enough of anything to go around. Whatever one child got—even food—was obtained at the expense of the others. Thus she had the doubly strong impression that life is a battle in which trying to get anything for yourself means incurring the hostility of everyone else, and she simply did not dare to do this. Her emotional re-education consisted in helping her to see that there need be no such fundamental conflict between her interests and other people's, but that, on the contrary, if she learns how, she and her imagined "rivals" can seek and find satisfaction to their mutual pleasure and advantage.

Childish Rivalries

For that matter, because we began life helpless and have never quite forgotten how it felt to have to wait for everything.

until somebody chose to give it to us, the idea that we 'can get things for ourselves at all is often slower than we realize in sinking into our emotions. And we need not have been brought up in poverty to continue looking upon other people as essentially competitors or rivals. For to start with, each family has but two parents, who in turn have just so much time and affection to give all their children, so that on the whole the more attention one child gets, the less there will be for the others. Also, in the average American family there is a limited supply of toys and playthings—dolls, bicycles, wagons, and the like—and each child inevitably sometimes wishes he could have his brothers' and sisters' share as well as his own. The eminent child psychiatrist, Dr. David M. Levy, used to tell a story of twin boys who reached the age of four years without either of them having spoken a word. In an automobile smash-up, one twin was killed. The other stood looking at his brother's lifeless body and said, just as plainly as an adult: "Good! Now I can have everything!"

By contrast, where children have no toys but those they make for themselves, this particular barrier to 'good will' seems to be eliminated. During World War I, I was stationed for some time in a remote French village where I found my only relaxation in playing godfather to a group of youngsters from six to ten years of age, most of whom never had owned a "store-bought" plaything. The boys played a sort of marbles with round pebbles and the girls made their own dolls with whatever scraps came handy, and for either it was easier to make their own toys than to grab them from someone else. I think it was at least partly for that reason that these were the happiest, most friendly children I have ever seen in my life. And looking back from this distance I rather regret my having given them some of the childish treasures which they never had possessed but may have begun to quarrel over when I left them. I am not suggesting that we go back to this state of affairs with our children, nor do I feel competent to outline any world-wide economic programme for adults, but I do believe that the more nearly we can make it possible for men and women to know that they can get or produce the things they need by their own efforts, the less prone they will be to the childish short-cut of despoiling one another. And on the same basis, one thing each of us must

do in order to acquire a friendly attitude towards others is to cultivate a sense of being able to supply his own needs.

Do You dare to be "Different"?

Still another way in which your neighbours may "get in your hair" is by insisting that you conform to their standards of tastes, beliefs, habits, and even appearance. In fact, one of the great problems that confront each of us from the moment he first begins making social contacts is that of how far he can be safe in *being himself*—which, he feels, means being different from everyone else and therefore an "outsider." The average child with a so-called "inferiority complex" really suffers from a sense of being different from other children, and can get this just as easily from being more intelligent than they as from being less so.

The less secure any group feels, the more it resents variation from its patterns in one of its members. The less sure we are at heart, for instance, of the soundness of our tastes or beliefs—anywhere from diet to religion—the more we resent the implied criticism of some other person's refusal to share them. Because children are particularly unsure of themselves, the average group of youngsters will instinctively be hostile toward a strange child who is thrust into it and has not learned its conventions; and the "queerer" the child seems in clothes or speech or manner or appearance, the slower the others will be in accepting him as "one of the crowd." But we see the same thing in a group of adults—or a community or nation—in proportion as it feels forced to maintain its standards or its "way of life" against opposition. The smaller the church, for instance, the more bitterly the "heretic" is sought out and assailed—as recently happened in the case of a young Amishman who dared to buy an automobile in order to take his little daughter for medical treatment, and was ostracized for being "worldly." But the less sure we are as a nation that the rest of the world will accept our ideas and ideals, the more mercilessly anyone who can be labelled "un-American" is shunned or persecuted. As Dr. S. Harvard Kaufman puts it: "The need to be different is paramount, yet to be one of a homogeneous group where it is

permitted to be different is the goal of emotional and social maturation ”

There is an important lesson in this for you if you happen to be “handicapped” by being different in religion, race, or colour from most members of the community in which you live I am not denying the right of the members of minority groups to organize and fight for justice, but I am afraid that fighting is not the way in which either groups or individuals will gain what they want most—social acceptance For the fact remains that when you denounce someone for “prejudice,” you either succeed in making him ashamed of himself, or give him a sense of being under attack Either way, you strengthen any sense of insecurity that he or the members of his group have, and so make him more hostile than ever to whoever is unlike him

I remember years ago being a member of a golf club from which a man of considerable wealth had been barred for reasons of race and religion The man was unwilling to accept the verdict of the membership committee, and, being a politician of considerable influence, was at last able to put enough pressure on the people who opposed him to force his admission He got little pleasure from his Pyrrhic victory, however, since nobody ever spoke to him unless he spoke first, or invited him to join a golf or bridge game For people will like you if you make them pleased with themselves, and no matter how much “right” you have to do so, any course of action that makes them uncomfortable or infringes on their freedom will inevitably make them hate you.

“*Projecting*” *Your Fears*

If you are afraid of other people, and especially of “people in general,” it is more than likely that the basis of your fear is an unconscious mental mechanism which dynamic psychology calls “projection” You are most apt to fear people because you don’t understand them, and the greatest obstacle to understanding people is that your ability to see them as they are is clouded by your secret need to see them in the light of your unconscious fears or prejudices A fair if imperfect parallel is what will happen if you ride in a closed car at night with the inside lights on—everything that you see through the windshield

will be confused and obscured by reflections of your own face and the interior of the car.

To make things worse, what you are most likely to "project" on other people is the blame or disapproval that originates in your own conscience or your childish Super-Ego. For it is less painful to persuade yourself that someone else thinks you are stupid, worthless, or immoral than to recognize the fact that something in your own mind is saying such things about you. Thus the heavier the load of childish guilt you carry about with you, the more apt you will be to see coldness, criticism, and frequently outright accusation in the eyes of people who would actually like to be friends with you if you would let them. The feelings you *think* you see are not theirs, but your own, "projected" on them.

The extreme case of "projection" is, of course, that of the paranoiacs I spoke of a while back. For the chief characteristic of this type of mental illness is "delusions of persecution," which involve attributing to others the forbidden wishes of which the victim himself unconsciously feels guilty. Because the most frequent of these wishes with such people is a sexual urge directed at the members of one's own sex, one of the most frequent forms which paranoid delusions take is that of threatened homosexual assault. Mrs. H. D., whom I thought I had cured of paranoid tendencies because for a time she seemed to recognize that some of her ideas were what she herself called "crazy," used to insist with complete conviction that she could not go on working in the office where she was employed because another woman "sits right opposite me and keeps throwing her heat at me." After some years of apparent sanity, this patient had a relapse, became too suspicious of me to come back for further treatment, and is now in a mental hospital, where she believes the doctors and nurses are "wild Indians" who may scalp her any minute.

In a milder but similar form of the same pattern we tend to project on to our neighbours criticism of whatever personal peculiarities we feel ashamed of. I've already told you of the man who thought the first thing people noticed when he came into a room was that he had one finger missing. In W. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* there is a memorable picture of a man who had similar feelings on the basis of a clubfoot, and

I happen to have seen a case in real life which paralleled it exactly. But one can be equally "self-conscious" on the basis of characteristics about which he or she feels childishly guilty, although an adult would see nothing in them to be ashamed of. Before Hollywood made busts fashionable, I knew many girls who grew round-shouldered from habitually holding a posture which would minimize the bounties of Nature, and others who did themselves enduring injury by wearing too tight brassières in the effort to attain the "boyish look" which now seems so outdated. All self-consciousness, in fact, involves projecting upon other people some unconscious sense of being "not quite what we should be."

It's Easy to make Friends

Again we must note that the chief characteristic of the attitudes which keep us from making friends is that they are childish, and, so far as adult life goes, unreal or exaggerated. Once you realize this, you will find that getting on with other people presents no great problem, but I will admit that the realization is "easier said than done." Where our fears are too intense and deeply rooted, I know of no way to overcome them except through some sort of psychotherapeutic treatment, preferably psychoanalysis. But most of us can accomplish a good deal by learning to neutralize the false associations which our neighbours have in our minds by what I have called "counter-associations."

A good illustration is the common, although psychologically risky, practice of throwing a child into the water in order to teach him to swim. In most cases the chances are that once the small victim finds that he can keep himself afloat, the sense of confidence he gains will wipe out earlier associations in which water is "something you drown in," though unfortunately, if his fears are strong enough, the shock of enforced immersion may induce a phobia that will last the rest of his life. There is less danger of this sort in *making yourself* do things you are afraid of, because, after all, you know you can stop if you want to; and if you have someone else's moral support for your efforts, you will find them easier still. So unless experience has shown that you have a severe neurosis about getting on with other

people, try taking my word for it that they want to be friendly if you'll only let them, and see whether you can't build up a mass of experiences that will outweigh your fears and release you from them. Once you cease to be scared, you will realize that there's nothing easier than to make friends if you want to take the trouble, and that it is well worth taking.

The average person's goodwill can be won by the most simple methods, even when your motives are partly or largely "selfish," since it is your *actions* not your motives you are judged by. Partly as a matter of legitimate self-interest I have long made it a habit to listen to what people say and to remember it when I next meet them. In the grocery store one wartime morning I happened to notice that the clerk looked tired, and asked if he had a headache, which it proved was the case. I recalled this the next day and asked him if he was feeling better. The question, particularly at a time when kind words were scarce in his business, paid dividends beyond my expectation in terms of such rare commodities as sugar and butter, and there's nothing to prevent your getting parallel results at any time by the same methods. All that such behaviour really involves is adjusting yourself to the other person and particularly to his craving for a little interest and attention.

Taking People as They Are

But remember, what you must adjust yourself to is people *as they are*, not as you would like them to be or believe they should be. A popular fiction writer has one of his characters say to another, who protested that a certain business venture "ought to be" highly successful. "Ought to be ain't is," and I can think of no better motto for our dealings with our neighbours. Keeping this fact in mind is especially important between husbands and wives and will be discussed when we come to speak of marriage. But meanwhile your boss, for instance, is the sort of person he is mainly by the force of circumstances over which he has no more control than you have, and which it is as futile to defy as the law of gravitation. If he is a martinet, then to hold your job you'll have to recognize that is the sort of man you work for, and protesting that he has "no right" to

be like that is as foolish as to say it has no right to rain when you are going on a picnic.

On the other hand, while everyone you have to deal with is the sort of person he is and cannot be basically changed by anything that you do or leave undone, human character is many-sided, and there is much that you can do in most cases to bring out the "side" of anyone that gives you pleasure or is advantageous to you. Learning how to do this is the next step in getting along with other people.

You will *not* bring out the better side of anyone by scolding him or making him ashamed of the things you dislike about him, for a quality or habit which is given up because of shame and guilt is not really conquered; it is only repressed and will ultimately find another outlet. And, what's worse, your victim will dislike you for it, as anyone will dislike someone who causes him pain. Even criticism is a dangerous weapon except in rare cases, since most people can't distinguish between criticism and the feeling of dislike or disapproval which they childishly associate with it. Tell the average woman you don't like her hat, for instance, and she's almost certain to assume that you're offended at *her* or have ceased to love her.

Bringing Out the "Best"

A much better way of bringing out the more desirable side of other people is by helping them to see a personal advantage in the changed behaviour you want to encourage; for indeed the only reason why anyone ever modifies his way of living is because he believes the new way will bring him more satisfaction than the old one. A young woman I knew had a sweetheart who was otherwise attractive, but offended her taste by being round-shouldered. She was smart enough to wait until a moment when he happened to be standing up straight and then compliment him on his figure. She insisted that she had to do this only three or four times to achieve a lasting transformation.

Still another sure way to make people like you is either to give them pleasure, or, still better, to show them new ways of getting it for themselves. Remember the popularity of writers and speakers who help people to "appreciate" (that is, gain more pleasure from) the beauties of Nature, or of art, or music.

If you learn how, you can even make your private hobbies a basis of popularity instead of the all too frequent cause of boredom. The trick is to talk about them in a way which does not sound like a display of your superior knowledge, but invites your hearers to share the fun you've been having. Even in courtship; the sure way to win a woman's love is to see that she finds any intimacies you may share a pleasure *for her*, not a mere compliance with your wishes; for the more you enjoy *each other*, not just yourselves, the more satisfying and enduring your relation will be.

Let me emphasize, however, that adjusting yourself to your neighbours does not mean making yourself a "doormat." For even if this did not inevitably end in your hating them so much as to be incapable of even the pretence of friendship, the realization of having imposed on you would in turn make them feel so guilty that they would feel uncomfortable in your presence and therefore dislike you. A famous psychiatrist whose name would be familiar to you recently told me a story I shall always cherish. Dr. B, for reasons that are immaterial, had attacked Dr. A. professionally, and Dr. A. learned about it. He immediately went to Dr. B and "read the riot act," demanding that he refuse a long-coveted appointment which Dr. A. said he would otherwise make sure was revoked. A year later the two doctors met again and Dr. A. said "All right, I am not a good Christian. You hit me, and I hit you back. Now we can be friends." And the two men have been on the best of terms from then until now.

Meekness gets You Nowhere

For that matter, you are likely to make more friends in the long run by an attitude of firmness and even of self-assertion than by being meek and docile. As we saw in the last chapter, the average person never has entirely outgrown his yearning for someone to be a father or a mother to him and will love you all the more if you seem strong enough to fill such a role in his life. But be careful not to carry this sort of relationship too far, for the feelings of a child toward a parent are a mixture of love and hate, so that the more a parent substitute you are, the greater the risk that those who feel that way about you may suddenly "turn on you" and hate you just as heartily as they

now love you The avidity with which church congregations will pounce on a minister to whom they have been devoted if he is convicted of a moral lapse of some kind—especially in the sex field—expresses the way all children feel toward a parent in whom they are “disappointed.”

I have said that getting on with people depends on learning to understand them, and that standing in your own light by unconsciously projecting your own feelings on to others is the greatest obstacle to this But, conversely, it is mainly our *unconscious* feelings that we project, so that the better we understand ourselves and recognize our actual motives, the easier it will be to sympathize with and make allowances for our neighbours For the fact beneath all other facts of human nature is that, deeply as we cherish our illusion of uniqueness, we and other people are much more alike than unlike, and that “judging other people by yourself” is a sound method in so far as you have learned to judge yourself correctly.

The Larger Self

Getting on with other people therefore does not mean being unselfish, or expecting them to be so But while you are and will always be the centre of your own concern and interest, as you truly grow up you may become conscious of a “larger self” consisting of any unit of humanity from a family, town, or college to mankind as a whole, and feeling yourself one with this larger self will add not only to your sense of your own value but to your enjoyment of life. On this basis, if they ever realize it, the day may come when all men will work together for their common happiness and welfare. For years I was puzzled by the command. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” because I thought it meant that I should care for him *as much as* for myself, and honesty compelled me to admit I could not. But later I realized that Jesus had not said this, and that “Love thy neighbour *as if he were thyself*” was not only a more accurate interpretation of His meaning, but much nearer the capacities of human nature. For to some extent all healthy-minded people can and do “identify” themselves with others, and by *sympathizing* (feeling with) them, draw immeasurably closer to them When you are moved by a tragic story, whether

it is fact or fiction, you have made yourself *one* in imagination with its victim and experience his grief as your own. And if you give pleasure to someone you love, you can share his delight without for the moment wondering whether he will thank you. Like so many other good things, identification can be dangerous when misused (as in the case of a parent who identifies himself with his children to the point where he forgets they are people in their own right), but it does provide the soundest psychological foundation for both individual friendship and the final unity of mankind. Realize that others are like you in far more ways than they are unlike, put yourself in their place; and work for the interests which they and you have in common, and getting along with them will cease to be a problem.

PART THREE

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

CHAPTER XI

BEFORE YOU GET MARRIED

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO are happier single than they ever would be married. An aunt of mine used to say she might have been a Swedenborgian except that the Swedenborgians believe you have to be married before you can get to Heaven. "I have got on without a man for seventy years," she would protest, "and I don't see why I should have to be bothered with one in the hereafter."

On the whole, Aunt Hetty was happier than most of us, though, as often happens in such cases, it was (quite unconsciously) at other people's expense. She found a congenial career in mothering a dead sister's children, but made sure that she would never lose them by conditioning them to feel the same way about marriage she did, and she and they lived together on into old age without apparently regretting what they had missed. But few of us can repress our natural instinct so effectively, and both Nature and good sense inspire most of us, when the time comes, to think about getting married—or to marry "without thinking" on an impulse which we cannot resist.

At the same time, few of us these days can marry without qualms and hesitations. We can't help knowing that statistically any given marriage has but two chances in three of surviving, and that many which do survive aren't the kind that we should like to be involved in. So, however much in love we may be, in the small hours of the night we wish that there were only some way to be sure that we are marrying the right person for us.

The Unconscious Love Ideal

If you happen to be in this situation, let me help you get one source of worry off your mind: The idea that there is just *one*

"right person" for you—or for anybody—is romantic nonsense. Its actual basis is a childish and perhaps forgotten day-dream. Somewhere in the back of your mind there is probably a picture you may not have looked at for so long that you do not even know it is there. It's the picture of your "love ideal"—the person you have always hoped to marry some day. You have long ceased to be conscious of the details of this picture, still less where they came from, but they are made up of everything your parents—and especially the parent of the other sex—meant to you at those moments when they satisfied your needs and desires most completely, *plus* all that you wanted them to be yet had to realize they were not. If you are a man, your love ideal may be a woman who is tenderness itself when you are sick, just as your mother was, but who also gives you the uncritical approval which your mother refused. In short, your love ideal is a person *made to order* for you, who will have no aim in life except to make you happy.

If you are like most of us, the time will come when you believe you have found someone who embodies this ideal, though the basis on which you will "recognize" him or her may be not so much a real resemblance to the parent whom you first loved as some single physical or mental characteristic which impressed itself upon your mind in childhood—blue eyes, wavy hair, or even a way of moving. There was never a more perfect picture of the average man's secret love dream than the old song, "I want a Girl just like the Girl Who married Dear Old Dad." But she must be different from Dad's girl in one way that is enormously important. Your girl will be *all* yours, and you will not have to share her love with anybody, as you did your mother's. In fact, you resent the thought that there ever could have been another man in her life and so probably will demand that she come to you a virgin.

Do You Expect too Much?

This last part of your dream may come true—at least physically; but the essence of your childish hopes is doomed to disappointment. For no matter whom you marry, she will have an individuality of her own, conditioned by the circumstances under which she grew up, and *her* happiness will be as inevitably of supreme concern to her as yours is to you. So to the degree

to which the love ideal that either of you cherishes has not been revised in the light of cold facts, marriage will not come up to your expectations. You will come home tired from the office expecting a well-cooked dinner of your favourite dishes and a sympathetic ear to listen to your troubles; instead, you find that the stove is out of order, the butcher was late, and your wife has a headache which she would much rather talk about than sympathize with you. The more childish you are at heart, the more this will inwardly infuriate you, even though you make a noble effort to smother your feelings and to play the role of a good husband. And, of course, the converse will be true of your wife.

As such disappointments pile up, you are likely to begin to wonder if you have not "married the wrong person," and eventually, when you cannot stand it any longer, you may seek a divorce in the hope of doing better next time. Yet nine times out of ten the trouble will not be that you are "mismatched," but that you have been expecting more of marriage than it possibly can give you. For, essential as it is to happiness, marriage alone will never *make* you happy. And how happy you are will depend much more on yourself than on the person you have married. Your main problem, in short, is not how to marry the right person, but how to *become* the sort of person who is able to adjust himself to marriage.

Like so many other aspects of your life, this will largely depend on your childhood experiences—above all, on the impressions you formed as a child of what a marriage is or should be. I do not say that you cannot outgrow these impressions if you later come to realize that the marriage they were based on was that of "two other people" (probably your parents), and that yours does not have to be like it. But unless you do this, if your first impressions were warped—if you were the product of an unsuccessful or broken marriage—it is all too likely that you will be "licked before you start" in your attempt to make your marriage happy. At worst you may even marry for largely neurotic reasons rather than for real ones, and may keep on marrying the *same kind* of "wrong" person—that is, someone who will make you equally unhappy in the same ways—no matter how often you think you have found the "right" one at last.

But what are "neurotic reasons" for falling in love or getting married?

"Neurotic" and "infantile" (or "childish") are often used interchangeably, but there is one distinction that ought to be made between them. Any of us can act or feel childishly "on purpose," knowing pretty clearly what we're up to, and as long as we can snap out of it when our long-range interests make it necessary, there is little harm done. A neurotic, on the other hand, is someone who acts or feels childishly but *does not know it*, and so cannot stop or change unless some outside influence brings the fact home to him. His behaviour is the product of largely unconscious fears and urges, and his real aims in life are as different from what he supposes—and still more what he professes—as a tiger from a house cat. Yet this is not his fault. He does not know what he is doing, still less why he does it, because the intelligence that ought to tell him is so blinded by anxiety or guilt (both themselves more or less unconscious) that it cannot function. The result is that when he experiences the unique emotional upheaval we call "falling in love," he is as helpless as if he had been struck by lightning.

Is Your Love Neurotic?

Whether a completely healthy-minded person *could* "fall in love" is a question to which I have never found an answer—mainly because there is no such person. As one of my teachers used to put it: "The right way to classify people is not as normal and neurotic; it is as neurotic, seriously neurotic, and very seriously neurotic." And even with someone who is relatively normal in all other respects the state of mind we call "falling in love" is a mild or serious neurosis, no matter how happy—or unhappy—it may make him, or how satisfactory a marriage it may ultimately lead to.

The word "love," unfortunately, is used to describe two states of mind which are completely different from each other, one neurotic and the other both adult and realistic. Strictly speaking, of course, no one knows what either kind of love is, for love is like electricity—an unseen force whose workings we can observe, but of the final nature of which very little has yet been discovered. And yet on the whole that doesn't matter, for all that

we really need to know is how the force works, and, if possible, how to control it. So far as you are concerned, love is the invisible attraction that impels you toward and holds you close to someone from whom you expect to get the two things that you want to get above all others—pleasure, and a feeling of security and of “belonging.” But notice, this means that love lives in the present and in the future, not in the past. You do not continue to love anyone for what he or she *has done* for you except as your recollection of this makes you feel more benefits will come your way. That is why love can die as abruptly as a light goes out when you cut off the current. But the main point about real love is that it is a *relation* between you and another person so that you can’t *really* love a person who does not return the feeling.

Being “in love” is another story. It springs not from actual memories or experiences, but from the deep wells of your unconscious and the childish hopes and dreams that dwell there. One proof of this is, of course, that being “in love” is so little subject to conscious intention or even to common sense and reason. No one falls in love on purpose or can explain rationally why he does so. And the process is the same, however deep and devastating the emotion. The grand passion of a Romeo for a Juliet is not psychologically different from a bobby-soxer’s swooning over Frank Sinatra (Juliet, as you may recall, was only fourteen.) All that actually happens when you fall in love is that you drape the mantle of your love ideal around the shoulders of some unsuspecting man or woman who may bear no more resemblance to it than some superficial quality of mind or body which has brought about the fancied “recognition.” For the moment your unconscious mind has taken over the controls of your life and you are completely “out of this world.”

At best, contracting this sort of “love neurosis” may not only be quite harmless, but a piece of real good fortune. There is probably no other form of ecstasy as perfect while it lasts as being in love with someone who reciprocates your feelings. And if your combined neuroses carry you both over the difficulties of the early stages of marriage adjustment, all’s well. For that matter, the less conflict there is between your unconscious and your conscious feelings, the better the chance that you will fall in love with someone between whom and you there is

enough real similarity of tastes, ambitions—and, yes, inhibitions—so that you will work out a mutually satisfactory marriage. For any two relatively normal people who are married with the honest purpose of trying to adapt themselves to each other and to work together for their mutual well-being generally can be happy as husband and wife.

Bad Reasons for Marriage

But unfortunately our unconscious minds may blind us to the fact that *happiness* should be the goal of marriage and drive us to marrying for other reasons. I need hardly say that marrying for money or for social standing is neurotic, since only a childish idea of the importance of such things will make them seem worth giving up our lives for. But there are still greater mistakes which we can make if our unconscious urges overpower our judgment.

For example, it may even be neurotic to marry for sexual reasons, even though the sex urge is the seed from which love springs and love cannot long exist without it. For because sex represents needs of the mind as well as of the body and can therefore be fully enjoyed only by people who are mentally in harmony with each other, mere sexual union cannot fully satisfy us, and may even be a sort of anæsthetic for the pains of unadmitted hungers. The girl, for example, who follows the ancient pattern of deliberately rousing a man's sexual desires and making a wedding ring the price which he must pay to satisfy them, may have "got herself a husband," yet condemned herself to a relation which is anything but marriage in the true sense. For if the man later realizes—as he is pretty sure to do under such circumstances—that he has been trapped into assuming the responsibility of supporting someone who has no real interest in him, he not only will cease to desire her, but may come to hate her with the special bitterness one feels toward a person who has taken advantage of his weakness.

On the other hand, a person who has grown up with the feeling that sex is unclean may be psychologically incapable of feeling love on what he calls "a higher plane" toward a person in whom he is sexually interested. David R., for instance, had sowed plenty of wild oats, but had never fallen in love till he met the

girl whom he vowed always to keep on the "pedestal" she occupied in his first visions of her. Actually, Phyllis was a fairly normal woman who might have responded like a woman to David's love-making if he had not shown such obvious horror at her least display of passion. As it was, she came to treat him with the coldness which he thought appropriate for a "good woman" and he in turn repressed whatever natural feeling he had for her. By degrees, their marital relations dwindled, and at last ceased because David lost his manhood—or thought he had lost it—altogether. But Nature was too strong for him, and when on a business trip he was forced into frequent contact with a woman who was everything he believed Phyllis was not, he found himself, as he put it, "too weak to resist temptation." He started a passionate "affaire," which proved he was as much a man as ever, but filled him with loathing for himself and for the woman who (as he liked to believe) had been responsible for his betraying his wife. Yet such was his inner inconsistency and conflict that if he had married someone like his mistress in the first place, he would have been no less miserable at the thought of being tied to someone he could not respect and honour as worthy to bear his name and be the mother of his children. A person like David is in fact "between the devil and the deep sea," because if you cannot marry someone for whom you have *both* respect and sexual desire, you are denying something of your own nature and dooming that part of you to hunger and frustration.

Marrying for Ego Satisfaction

The unconscious aim of people who marry for wholly non-sexual reasons is to attain through someone else an ego satisfaction they have failed to gain through their own efforts, like the young wife of an elderly statesman, about whom a witty Frenchman said. "She goes to bed with her husband's reputation." Or, again, you may fall in love through an unconscious wish to find an antidote for your own moral shortcomings. It was David R.'s sense of guilt at his early promiscuity which drove him to marry Phyllis—the old story of the sinner who believes "the love of a good woman" can "redeem" him. Someone who is being psychoanalysed and forced to face his weakness and self-deceptions is likely to fall in love (though seldom with the

analyst) as a defence against the attack on his self-esteem which the treatment involves. He wants to be able to say to himself: "I can't be too bad, for this glorious being loves me."

Yet, as all too many men and women have discovered, this method is ineffective because its results at best are temporary. For while it is true that different people bring out different sides of each other, and the man who is married to a good wife (for him) does tend to develop the best side of himself, no wife can draw anything out of a man that isn't in him. The man whose self-confidence is based on feeling that his wife "believes in him" will begin to weaken once the first effects of her devotion wear off, and may either go to pieces or seek a fresh source of moral support in another woman. It is equally unrealistic and neurotic, if you are a woman, to love someone because you believe you can "reform" him. For if a man changes his behaviour just to please you, no matter how much in love with you he may be, his essential feelings and desires will be the same as ever, and eventually they will break out, either in the form of which you tried to cure him or, perhaps, a worse one.

Falling in love with someone who is unworthy of you (like the hero of *Of Human Bondage*) may express a morbid need to punish yourself through shame and humiliation. Or, again, you may be getting a second-hand satisfaction out of having someone else release the impulses which you have but do not dare to give way to. Many a woman gets a kick out of the very "coarse streak" in her husband which she makes him believe is so shocking to her, yet at the same time pours out on him the "righteous disapproval" by which she must prove to herself that she does not really entertain such wicked and ignoble feelings.

"Unsolved Problems"

At the core of a neurotic marriage there is nearly always what is called an "unsolved problem," which the unsuspecting man or woman has carried over from childhood—the problem of how to get some satisfaction (or, perhaps, revenge) which the person feels he "has a right to" yet has never achieved. It is like a "bad debt" which you cannot bring yourself to write off the books and keep trying to collect long after it is outlawed,

even from people other than the person who first owed it to you. And the crowning irony is that you have no hope of collecting, anyhow, because the only way to do so would be to turn back the clock and live your past life over again

The real reason, for example, why John S got married was to "collect" the approval which he felt his mother had denied him. Never in his life, he said, had she been willing to admit that anything he did was to his credit, or ought not to have been done better. For example, John's dearly loved father died a month before John was to graduate from college, and his work in the final examination was naturally handicapped both by his grief and by the general confusion involved in the break-up of his childhood home. Yet when the results of the examinations were announced and John learned that he had ranked second in his class, his mother's comment was: "I am thankful that your father didn't live to hear this. You are the first S who ever graduated without winning the Gold Medal."

Obviously the "right" wife for John would have been a generous and appreciative woman who would not have been afraid to give him credit when he earned it. But John did not and could not pick such a woman because only someone who was "hard to please" could represent his mother to him. He married a girl who really hated all men because of a morbid sense of sex inferiority, and whose own unconscious aim in life was to make sure that no man ever got a "swelled head" if she could prevent it. The fact that John became a professional success filled her with jealous fury to the point where she wound up by refusing to appear in public with him because, as she admitted frankly, she could not stand being treated as "just Mrs. John S." The pair were completely miserable until psychoanalysis gave them the courage to dissolve a marriage that should never have been contracted.

Martha H believed she was an "idealist," and managed to sell the notion to a lot of other people, including her husband. She took a particularly lofty attitude toward what she called "men's vileness" and made it quite clear that only from a sense of wifely duty would she submit to it. Her unconscious aim in getting married may sound unconvincing to a person who has never watched its counterpart brought to the surface by the psychoanalytical scalpel, but if you dig deep enough, it is far

from uncommon. She was gratifying through her husband a long-lived although, of course, unconscious yearning to castrate her father. This grew partly from her mother's having taught her to regard the sexual relation as a way in which men exploit women for their selfish pleasure, and partly—on a still deeper level—from jealousy at its having been her mother, not herself, who was the object of her father's feared but coveted attentions. Martha might have married a man as repressed as she was and done him but little damage, but that would have left her childish "problem" unsolved, so she chose a vigorous and passionate man to whom she doled out sexual favours as she might have thrown bones to a dog, and whom she at last succeeded in making as impotent as if she had literally taken a knife to him.

One more, and our final case of marriage for neurotic reasons, is the varied and tempestuous marital career of Edgar K., whose unconscious aim in getting married was to get back at his mother for having "betrayed" him. From his standpoint, she did this in two ways—first, as every mother does, by giving herself to her husband rather than the baby who wanted her "all to himself"; and, second, by having other children, to each of whom in succession she transferred the adoration Edgar had enjoyed for what seemed such an unfairly short time. For Mrs. K. was the sort of woman who "loves babies," and loses her interest in her children as soon as they are no longer helpless and dependent. Edgar's revenge was unfaithfulness to a succession of wives, each of whom he had been "desperately in love with" as long as she represented an unconscious way of torturing the one to whom he happened to be married, but ceased to have any further interest for him (except as another victim) once she became his wife herself. For that matter, most marital infidelity involves much more unconscious effort to punish the wife or husband than sincere love for the "other" man or woman.

Should Neurotics Marry?

Marriage for neurotic reasons like these is foredoomed to failure, but that does not mean neurotics should not marry and may not be reasonably happy with each other *if* their motives lack the strong aggressive elements which I have tried to picture. The proverbial "marriage of December and May" is not very apt

to work well, but I have seen several very happy marriages which might be described as those of "June and November"—that is, marriages in which the man was old enough to be his wife's father. Such a marriage perhaps works best where the wife has a particularly strong unconscious need for a man whom she can look up to and depend on—that is, for a "father substitute"—and where the man can feel comfortable only with a woman to whom he is indisputably superior in experience, prestige, or sophistication. Presumably reliable statistics also seem to show that marriages in which the wife is older than the husband have more than the average degree of success, at least in this country—doubtless because there is no man on earth who is as anxious as the American male to get back the "Mom" he has never ceased to miss and grieve for. In either of these cases there is an element of danger in the fact that anybody's feeling toward a parent substitute is so likely to be mixed—for instance, the more you depend on anyone the more bitterly you will hate him if you feel he has "let you down." But as long as this does not happen, the fact that a wife or husband is a parent substitute is not seriously dangerous. Indeed, it is doubtful whether anyone would marry at all if it were not for the need to regain the sense of security and permanence which his first home and parents gave him.

Again, it is possible—though perhaps not common these days—for two people, both of whom are sexually inhibited, to work out a satisfactory marriage in which sex is relegated to a place of small importance. Mrs. J. M. was the sort of woman who confided to a close friend of her own sex that although she had been married more than forty years and had three children, her husband had never seen her undressed. She removed her clothing and put on a "modest" nightgown in the bedroom closet, and expected to continue this as long as she lived. Fortunately for both of them, Mr. M. used to say he did not see why even young people needed to be sexually intimate more than once a month at most, and that the intervals would naturally lengthen as they grew older. Mr. and Mrs. M. attained their golden wedding as a happy, loving, and devoted couple, so far as they or anyone else knew. Mr. M. took out the unconscious rage induced by his frustrations in hating the rich and privileged and became an ardent political reformer, while his wife developed

into the sort of domestic tyrant who ruled not only her husband, but her children and grandchildren by being so "sweet and unselfish" that they were ashamed to do anything that disturbed her, and whose deadliest weapon was the ability to become ill any time she did not have her own way.

How to avoid Needless Blunders

A friend of mine used to say that marriage reminded him of an automobile: when you stopped to think how complicated it was and how many different things could go wrong with it, the fact that it ran at all seemed like a miracle. But just as a car that's basically sound can generally be made to run somehow with a bit of tinkering, so most marriages in which the partners are comparatively adult, well-adjusted people can be made to function to the mutual satisfaction of both parties by a bit of common sense and patience. All this chapter means to do is help you avoid before marriage as many as possible of the things that may cause trouble later. For while there is no one "right" person for you, that is no reason for your picking a particularly "wrong" one if you can avoid it.

How much "in love" you are is not in itself a valid reason for marrying anybody, since being "in love" is fundamentally neurotic and only obscures your judgment as to whether this is really someone you'll enjoy spending your life with. There is no relation between the intensity of romantic passion and the length of time it will last—indeed too intense romantic love is apt to die out rather quickly for the reason that it has a larger share of the infantile hopes and yearnings which I spoke of in connection with the "love ideal." It is possible for people who are not "in love" at all to marry and develop a profound, lifelong attachment to each other, as may be seen from what happens in many countries where young men and young women do not marry for romantic reasons, but because their parents have selected them as suitable for each other, and they have been willing to accept their parents' judgment. For what actually makes two people love each other is *living together*, happily and sympathetically, and in this sense I doubt whether it is possible for a man and woman really to love each other before they are married. But just as a young man's bright illusions of the

fame and fortune that lie just ahead help him to stand the ignominy of beginning at the bottom, so the sweet intoxication of romantic love fulfilled may dull the impact of the more prosaic aspects of the early stage of marital adjustment. Thus the truly ideal marriage is that of two people who are "in love," but who also have the qualities that fit them for congenial partnership after romance, as such, fades.

"Lovers' Quarrels"

It is easier to point out evidences that you and someone you think you are in love with do not have such qualities than to tell you how to be sure that you have them. For example, nothing could be further from the truth than the idea that so-called lovers' quarrels are a good sign and show how intensely the two people love each other. What they actually show is either that both lovers are emotionally immature and are demanding from each other more than they have any right to hope for (a complete monopoly of interest and attention, for example), or that at heart they hate each other and are planning marriage only as a way of dealing with some "unsolved problem." People who cannot get on harmoniously before marriage seldom do so under the more serious and trying privations marriage involves.

Another poor indication for successful marriage is that the two people are bored with each other when they are not actually making love in one form or another. I have certainly not denied that sex urge is the basic force which attracts men and women to each other, or that it is natural for people who are in love to be passionately eager for physical contact. But because your sexual desires have their roots in childhood, it may happen that you feel the strongest sexual yearning for a person who revives earlier associations (by something in his or her appearance, for example) but with whom you have not much in common on an adult basis. And since most of the time you spend together after you are married will be given to non-sexual activities, it is a good idea not to marry if you and your sweetheart "have nothing to talk about" when you are where physical intimacies are out of the question—at lunch in a restaurant, for instance. And along the same lines there is no more dangerous

form of self-deception than "to kiss and make up" after a misunderstanding without having found the reason for your disagreement.

A Few More "Don'ts"

Do not marry anyone who feels that he is doing you a favour by consenting to the marriage, or that you are doing him one. For no matter how hard he tries to repress it, this involves a blow to the self-esteem of the "inferior partner" that will ultimately make him hate the person who inflicted it upon him. And don't marry someone with completely different tastes and social standards from yours unless both of you are willing to compromise and learn to appreciate each other's viewpoints. For as love itself is an embodiment of the quest for pleasure, nothing keeps it alive more effectively than mutual enjoyment, and the more things you enjoy doing together, the better your chance of a long and happy union.

Finally, before you marry anybody, there are certain things you should talk over and agree on—or else, honestly, "agree to disagree." Most important is perhaps the question of whether you want to have children, and, if so, when and how many. And don't be too sure if you differ about this that you can make your partner change his or her mind after you are married. Nearly as essential is the relative importance you attach to money or success or social prestige. For if one of you sets a high value on such things and the other ignores them, you will not be able to avoid serious discord. But for all this, the essential thing to realize is that whether you find happiness in marriage will not depend on what you do *before* the wedding but what you do in the years that follow.

If you are not seriously neurotic and will make a sincere and intelligent effort, you can achieve a happy marriage with practically anyone you fall in love with. And with all its disadvantages and difficulties, marriage remains the most generally satisfactory way of life for any normal man or woman.

CHAPTER XII

HOW TO KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE HAPPY

IT IS JUST AS NATURAL for a husband and wife to love each other as it is for them to breathe. For love is the feeling that two people instinctively have for each other if they give each other pleasure or create it together. It is psychologically impossible for a baby not to love his mother because for a long time she is his chief source of pleasure, and in normal circumstances she loves him for the same reason, even though the pleasure she takes in him is vastly more complex and has a much larger share of non-sexual factors.

Love would be equally automatic and inevitable between married partners if their minds were free of fears, grudges, and inhibitions. For while it is love that makes a marriage happy, it is no less true that happy marriage makes love. Unless something interferes, the elements of love and happiness act and react in an ascending spiral as long as the marriage endures. It helps, of course, if the couple are "in love" beforehand because this provides an extra "priming charge" of pleasure. But because the marital relation is or ought to be enjoyable *per se*, it is not essential that they should be "madly in love" beforehand if they are not biased against marriage or each other—as might happen if they had been forced to marry or if one of them were in love with someone else.

The first pleasure that a normal marriage creates comes, of course, through satisfying the sex impulse. For one thing, the act of sex between two people who are mentally and physically well adjusted to each other creates the most intense pleasure that a human being can experience. But besides that, the relief of sexual tension makes one better able to enjoy all other pleasures, even those which have no direct sexual content. You could not get the last thrill out of a sunset if you had a toothache or were famishing from hunger, and no more can you enjoy

companionship and mutual understanding fully with the person to whom you look for the satisfaction of your sexual desires if the person seems indifferent to them or frustrates them

Satisfactory sexual adjustment is exactly as important to a happy marriage as a sound foundation is to a house. It certainly is not "all there is to marriage" any more than a good cellar is a complete dwelling. But no marriage can be permanently happy if both partners do not find real and abiding pleasure in their sex life. And notice I said "both partners"

The Kinsey Report asserts that 30 per cent. of females are what it calls "sexually unresponsive" and "fundamentally apathetic," regardless of anything a man may do to arouse them. This may be true as a matter of conscious reaction, but one cannot believe that so large a share of human beings are *congenitally* lacking in normal emotional endowment. Psychological experience would seem to indicate that most of these unfortunate girls and women can become "like other people" if they have not been too sternly repressed by bad early training to be willing even to submit to treatment. But certainly no girl who is like this and aware of the fact has a right to marry unless she is ready to try to do something about it, or without warning her future husband of what he is letting himself in for. For even though she may be "submissive," there is nothing so frustrating or in the long run infuriating and castrative to a normal man as making love to someone who does not react emotionally. And while there are prostitutes who learn to pretend to respond, I doubt whether they can fool a man who did not want to be fooled, or fool any man long.

Poor Excuses

It is both amusing and pathetic to study the "explanations" married people give for having ceased to care for each other. I do not believe there ever was a woman who stopped loving her husband because he was negligent about wiping out the bathtub, or even because he did not give her enough money to run the house. A wife may believe such things when she says them, but almost invariably if you pin her down she will confess she has not found her marriage sexually satisfying. And, of course, the converse is true of the man whose professed grudge is that his wife nags him or is always throwing away money

People who do not feel cheated sexually may have squabbles over money, but they are not deep or lasting. On the other hand, if you are puzzled at what certain married people can "see in each other," it is safe to guess they make each other happy sexually, and are thus inclined to look at each other through rose-coloured glasses

Mildred J used to amuse her friends by raving over what a handsome man her Bill was, and repeating his opinions about everything from politics to cooking as if they were oracles from on high, though to anybody else Bill was the sort of chap who never would be noticed in a crowd and had not been especially successful in business or anywhere else. What Mildred alone knows is that Bill is a skilled and ardent lover who has opened realms of delight to her which she never knew existed, so that memories of his love-making cast a bright glow over everything else he does, however trivial it appears to an outsider

And yet even Mildred does not realize how rarely fortunate she is, not only to have found a man like Bill, but to be able to enjoy him. For unless you are one man or woman in a hundred, even though you marry someone you believe to be the sweetest person in the world, you are still marrying a victim of Victorian morality and sexual miseducation, and your wife or husband is doing the same thing. By the time the average man and girl are ready and able to be married, their minds are so swamped by sex fear on the one hand and romantic nonsense on the other that nine-tenths of them never discover what a sexually happy marriage is like. The result is that without its natural foundation, their house of love either crumbles or has to be held up by such artificial props as "moral principle," fear of "what the neighbours will say," the supposed necessity of "keeping a home for the children," or fanatically strict divorce laws.

Sexual Adjustment takes Time

Yet for all this it is still true that with mutual patience and forbearance almost any reasonably normal couple can achieve a happy sex life. What makes patience so essential is, as I have said, that both the partners are emotionally handicapped to start with. Sexual adjustment takes time, and love alone by no means ensures it. It is all too common to see two romantic

lovers come back from their honeymoon heartsick and disillusioned because they have not attained the ecstasy they looked for, and too often their immediate reaction is that they have made a mistake and should not have married each other. Actually, it should be months or years before any couple can be justified in feeling that their sex life is a hopeless failure. I have even known one happy pair who told me it was five years before they could fully satisfy each other, although since then they have found a steadily increasing delight in love-making.

Of course, many if not most couples who marry have had some degree of sexual intimacy with each other in advance of the wedding ceremony, perhaps on the basis of the avowed feeling that to marry someone you have never slept with is as foolish as to buy a car you have not driven. But the problem is not really quite so simple as that.

On one side, there is the fact that being married to a person makes you feel quite differently about him from the way you did when you were single, so that people who have been devoted and successful lovers sometimes lose all interest in each other once their love becomes a "duty." Conversely, and perhaps still oftener, the fear and guilt which most people feel at a relation which society still calls "illicit" have a cumulative effect which marriage may not cure. For the person with whom feelings of this sort are too strongly associated in your mind is not stripped of these associations by a marriage ceremony. On the whole, only two people whose premarital relations have been literally shameless—that is, who have had no sense of guilt about them—have as good a chance of happy marriage as a pair who have been able to "wait."

One reason for sexual failure—and a very common one—is simple ignorance, even on the part of people who believe that they "know all there is to know" about it. Every bride and groom should realize that, as Bertrand Russell says, "The sexual act is not instinctive," no matter how natural and inevitable the wish to perform it may be. Nor does the fact that a man has "learned about life" from a prostitute or a sophisticated woman and believes himself to be an expert lover qualify him to initiate a virgin. This is not the place for details—there are several first-rate books on sexual technique, and if your own methods have not been successful, it would be a wise idea to read one.

But no book can give you "all the answers," if only because there are no two people whose sexual feelings and responses are exactly alike. Each relation, even between two "experienced" people, presents a new problem, which is rarely solved immediately.

The "Battle of the Sexes"

Another important source of sexual difficulties is the "battle of the sexes," which has perhaps never been as savage anywhere as in our country right now. I can heartily endorse the dictum of David L. Cohn that "American men do not really like women," and the woman who wrote me that she "did not know a wife who did not hate her husband" was unfortunately guilty only of exaggeration. More than either realizes, practically every husband enters marriage prejudiced against his wife because she is a woman, just as every woman is more or less prejudiced against men as men. Indeed, a girl in love often tells herself that the main reason why she cares for this man is that he is "not like the others." And specifically, in so far as they have taken what their elders told them seriously, the average man expects that marriage will involve at least some sexual frustration, and the average woman thinks she will be sexually exploited. And sad to say, what is apt to happen in the early stages of their sex life will confirm both notions.

You see, you can't make a child feel from the moment he is conscious of his sexual desires that they are unclean and nasty, and expect him to be free to satisfy them without fear or mental reservation merely because he (or she) is now married. The unconscious mind just doesn't hear the marriage ceremony, or at best can't more than half believe in the permission to do what has been so long forbidden which "I now pronounce you man and wife" is meant to convey. This applies to men as well as to women, even though men are less conscious of it.

Guilt has Opposite Effects

Worse still, by one of life's bitterest ironies, sex guilt generally has the opposite effect on men from what it has on women. It hastens the man's attainment of the sexual climax and retards

the woman's, leading all too often to the sort of tragedy that wrecked the lives of Bert and Molly D.

Throughout all his ten years of married life, and in what little sex experience (mainly with prostitutes) he had beforehand, Bert had suffered from the form of partial impotence known as "premature ejaculation."¹ No matter how hard he tried to "hold back," he would have his orgasm at the first instant of sexual contact, and often before that, during the preliminary stages of love-making. The result, of course, was that while he was able to rouse Molly (an apparently quite normal person) sexually, he could never give her any satisfaction, and medical treatment in the form of drugs, massages, and the like was naturally ineffective, since the trouble was in Bert's mind and not in his sexual organs.

I tried to explain it to him this way: "If you were a small boy, reaching to the top shelf in the pantry for a cookie, and feared that at any moment Mother might arrive and order you to let the cookies alone—perhaps even slap you for helping yourself without permission—you would surely grab your cookie just as quickly as you could and try to gulp it down before somebody took it from you. You've been doing the same thing in your sex life, for exactly the same reasons, though, of course, you did not realize what you were doing."

Bert and Molly might have stuck it out indefinitely, though as time went on they quarrelled over trifles with ever-increasing bitterness. But the war came, and Bert was away from home for more than three years. In his absence, Nature proved too strong for Molly, and when Bert returned, instead of greeting him with the enthusiasm he had dreamed of, Molly told him that she was about to bear another man's child. Bert's first impulse was to kill both Molly and her lover, but common sense won the day, although he feels his life is ruined. And, to balance the score, I am afraid Molly's sense of guilt at her "betrayal" of a man who tried so hard to be good to her will make her less happy in her second marriage than she expects.

¹ I cannot agree with Dr. Kinsey that the male who reacts rapidly is "superior," above all if the reaction is involuntary from the standpoint of his conscious wishes. He not only misses complete sexual pleasure, which requires coincidence of climax, but may *feel* almost as impotent as if he could have no orgasm at all.

Neither Partner to Blame

The point I would like to stress is that this misery might have been avoided if both Molly and Bert had known where his trouble came from and that it could probably be cured by psychiatric treatment. But thousands of other men have the same difficulty in a less extreme form, and thousands of women make the situation worse by taking so long to "relax" that their partners have had what they wanted—and often lost interest—by the time their wives are "ready." In this sense, I do not think it is too much to say that nine out of ten men in this country are partially impotent, and as large if not a larger share of women are partially frigid. Both conditions spring, as I have said, from childish sex guilt, and both usually respond to psychiatric treatment. Yet even this ought not to be necessary in most cases if the partners will be patient with each other and accept the fact that *neither one is to blame* for their difficulties. For here, as in other cases, the early associations tend to be wiped out by new ones, if these are pleasant and reassuring. When failure on either or both sides is met with sympathy and understanding, and when mutual trust and confidence is thus developed, the rapture which seemed too much to hope for may eventually be won.

What is most apt to prevent this is the tendency of either partner to regard the other's attitude as growing out of selfishness or meanness. A composite picture of thousands of marriages might look something like this. From the time when he was weaned, or anyhow from his first realization of his mother's attitude toward his attempt to enjoy sexual pleasures, John has always feared, as he fears almost nothing else, a woman's power to say "No," and inwardly suspects every woman of using this power to "keep him where she wants him." If Mary, his wife, appears reluctant, or is unresponsive to his passion, this fear is revived, along with the repressed rage that it always has engendered. The result may be a resolution to get what he wants regardless of how Mary feels about it; it may be a conscious or unconscious impulse to find someone else who will be kinder to him; or it may lead to a loss of confidence in his own sexual powers that ends by robbing him of manhood.

Mary, in turn, has grown up believing, first, that she should

be ashamed of having sexual desires, and second, that sex is a field where men have a most unfair advantage, both because it is for them to make the first advances, while a woman must "wait to be asked," and because men do not have to worry about "consequences." Mary's feeling, therefore, is that unless she is careful, she will be used to suit John's convenience without regard for her needs or feelings, as so many of her sex have been before her. The ironic fact is that neither John nor Mary is a fundamentally unkind or selfish person, and except for their sex prejudices, they love each other dearly. But each has profound needs of a personal as well as sexual nature, and each fears the other will ignore them. And, as happens in so many cases, the effect of their fear is to create the very situation that they are afraid of.

Is Anyone "Oversexed"?

Paradoxically, in some cases fear based on sex guilt may seem to work "in reverse" with either men or women. It is at least highly doubtful whether there is any such thing as an "oversexed" person. The unhappy woman who is called a nymphomaniac is as much a victim of unconscious sex guilt as her virtuously frigid sister, except that in her case she is able to achieve a momentary physical release of tension without gaining the deeper emotional satisfaction that this ought to give her. She is in a situation like that of the person who "can never get enough to eat" because he is unable to assimilate food. The man who is sexually insatiable is a victim of the same emotional disorder, sometimes known as "orgiastic impotence," and is equally a victim of his own unconscious inhibitions. His real difficulty is not greed, but hunger, which he cannot satisfy because what he gets is no more than the husks of sexual nourishment without the substance of it.

I am regularly asked, "How often is it normal for a married couple to have sexual relations?" One answer, of course, might be that since there never were two absolutely normal people, no one can say.

On the whole, the evidence of the Kinsey Report seems to indicate that the majority of married couples at least after thirty do not vary much from Martin Luther's ancient standard

of "twice a week, a hundred times a year," although it is interesting that, for all their emphasis upon the sacredness of marriage, devoutly religious people on the average achieve less satisfaction than most other married couples. Mutually satisfactory relations have been known to vary all the way from once a month or less to several times a day (or night), depending on the physical and psychological peculiarities of the people involved. And the only rule I know of is that there is no rule except that of mutual understanding and adjustment.

Don't be "Unselfish"

But let me remind you that adjustment does not mean resigning yourself to frustration or dissatisfaction; it means finding the way of life that will make you happiest in the long run. One of the most dangerous attitudes that married people can take toward each other is based on misunderstanding or exaggeration of the sort of teaching given at their wedding to Princess Elizabeth of England and her husband by the venerable Archbishop of York: "Love must always be unselfish, and unselfishness is the true secret of a happy married life." I have seen almost as many marriages wrecked by the efforts of one or both partners to be unselfish as by any other cause I know of. For the moment you begin trying to be unselfish with another person in the sense of pleasing him at your expense, you unconsciously start being sorry for yourself and hating the person for whom you are making "sacrifices."

Arthur K., for instance, might have been a happy and successful husband if his Bertha had not been so determined to be the "unselfish wife" she had been taught to cherish as her ideal. Starting with their honeymoon, she resolutely put her husband's tastes and preferences before her own. She had hated the idea of a sea voyage because she was subject to seasickness, but had not told Arthur because he had "set his heart on it." When they set up housekeeping, her menus were invariably made up of the dishes Arthur liked—especially the ones that she detested—and she would not accept money for domestic help, but "wore herself out" with meticulous housekeeping. Later, when the children came, she was as much their "slave" as she was Arthur's, and was known to all the neighbourhood as a "model wife and mother."

What the neighbours did not realize any more than Bertha herself was that she had grown steadily more and more reproachful and "superior" in her attitude and manner, until she succeeded in making poor Arthur feel he did not deserve to be married to so wonderful a woman. He had never been a drinking man, but finally discovered, as so many other men have, that a few drinks "with the boys" restored his self-esteem for the time being, and partially eased the strain of living up to Bertha. Had she got honestly angry when he came home in a state which he knew she regarded as revolting, Arthur would at least have felt that she was "human." But her long-suffering meekness made him feel more of a heel than ever, and eventually strengthened the compulsion to take the one way he knew of quieting his self-reproach, until he became a confirmed alcoholic. More men have, in fact, been driven to drink by "good" wives like Bertha than by all the "bad" ones.

Not unselfishness, but unscrupulous fairness is the basis on which happy marriage must rest, and it scarcely can be carried too far. I know a devoted couple, for example, who, if one piece of toast gets scorched at the breakfast table and there is no time to make another, will divide the burnt piece and the good one equally between them rather than give either one a chance to be what they call "noble." And while it is true that two people will not always have the same idea of what is fair between them, you will find agreement is not hard when neither one has reason to suspect the other will try to put something over on him.

Childish Selfishness

Still, as deadly as unselfishness can be in marriage, there are childish types of selfishness which are as bad if not worse. As you may remember, the "love ideal" we all originally want to marry is a substitute for mother or father. In fact, marriage is essentially an effort to revive in an adult form the sense of secure love we felt with our parents in our childhood. But if we forget that we are adults—which is all too easy—look out! There is no worse or more certain-to-be-disillusioned wife or husband than a grown-up baby, and there are more people who are grown-up babies in their attitude toward marriage than anyone realized until psychology revealed the fact.

Take, for instance, the too common idea that if you can marry somebody who really loves you, he or she will "live only to make you happy." A child, and especially a little baby, may get that sort of impression of his mother, since he does not know at first—and then tries to forget—that she has other interests in life besides him. But the idea that a grown-up man or woman ever can feel that way about you is obvious nonsense. Loving Mary will not kill John's interest in ball games, to say nothing of his business or his men friends; nor will loving John make Mary cease to be concerned with her appearance or with what other women think about her. In fact, we might just as well admit at this point that marriage won't permanently destroy either John's or Mary's wish to be attractive to the other sex in general, though it should make them take it less seriously.

Don't Live with Your Parents!

An important corollary of the danger to marital happiness involved in unconscious childishness is the rule that no married couple ought to live with either partner's parents if they possibly can help it. And when I say "possibly" I mean just that. Dr. Paul Popenoe recently advised two young people who feared that the housing shortage might compel them to live with the bridegroom's parents to hunt up another couple in a similar position and "change parents," on the valid basis that living with someone else's parents would be less likely to wreck their marriage than trying to live with their own. If you face such a decision as this, don't forget it is *your* parents, not your wife's or your husband's that you should make sure to keep away from, since they are the people in whose company it will be hardest for *you* to act and feel like an adult. For one thing, nothing will tend to spoil your sex life as effectively as having the people around who first filled your mind with sex guilt. Couple after couple have told me that they could not have satisfactory intercourse even when visiting their parents, especially if their bedroom was not "soundproof." And to have even one parent live with you is still worse. Typical was George J., who became completely impotent from the day his mother moved in with him and his wife, and told me: "I found I could not even touch Mary without thinking of how Mom would feel if she knew what I was up to."

Living with your parents is a trying situation even if they have the best intentions and are consciously resolved to keep their hands off, for the best of resolutions may be broken without knowing that one does so, and there is no situation in which our unconscious urges are quite so strong as they are in this one. Only a mother whose own marriage has been sexually and emotionally satisfying can help loving her son enough to be jealous of his turning from her to another woman, any more than a frustrated mother can help secretly resenting her daughter's achievement of the happiness that she missed. And if fathers are somewhat less dangerous, it's because the average father plays a relatively small part in conditioning his children. The more you have been either spoiled or dominated by your parents, the more likely you will be to slip back into the old patterns if they are too close to you, physically or emotionally, and you cannot slip back and still be successful as a husband or wife. If two people have been married for a long time and are thoroughly adjusted to each other, it may not do any harm to give Grandma or Grandpa a home in their old age, for by this time everyone concerned will recognize that it is *your* home in which *they* are visiting, not the other way around. But I still say, don't do even this if you can help it!

Look Out for "High Ideals"

Some men, and perhaps most women, take pride in the fact that they have "high ideals" about marriage and unconsciously use these to rob themselves of any happiness real marriage might bring them. For an ideal is a *demand*, either on yourself or the other person, and the "higher" it is, the more likely it is to be a demand for perfection. Yet only someone who is a child at heart expects perfection of himself or anyone else, and forgetting this fact can lead only to despair and heartbreak. Not only the "sensible" attitude toward marriage, but the only one that will let you enjoy it in the long run, is to see it as a department store which carries a wide range of ready-made goods, but does not make anything to order. You must pick the article which seems nearest to what you want, buy it "as is," and get as much satisfaction out of it as you can.

Actually, if you can approach marriage in this spirit, you will

find that what you do get out of it is more and better than your childish ideals pictured, even though it is quite different. After a few years at least, being married to a person who was made to order for you would be about as exciting as looking in a mirror, whereas being married to someone with ideas, tastes, and aims of his or her own never ceases to be interesting if you will keep your mind and heart open

I know no more foolish superstition than that men and women cannot understand each other. Speaking as a man, I can see nothing in the least mysterious about the way a woman's mind works, nor do I think I have any difficulty in conveying my thoughts to a woman. Practically all misunderstanding between men and women grows out of the fears we have already discussed—above all, the fear of being "at the mercy" of someone you think your happiness depends on. A young man in love regards his sweetheart as a mystery because for the moment she has taken on the role of the withholding or bestowing mother, whose reasons for giving or refusing happiness he could not fathom. But once he is sure, as a good marriage can assure him, that his wife needs him as much as he needs her, and that he need no more fear her caprices than she does his, she is no longer "unfathomable"; she is or may be a friend who understands and loves him as no other friend can, because there is no one else with whom he has so nearly a complete community of interest. I do not, of course, mean to say that a man's mind and a woman's are exactly alike, although fundamentally both have the same essential cravings, the idea that the two are needed to "complete" each other is as old as Plato. In fact, there are sides of a man's nature which he never quite dares to reveal to another member of his own sex, and the converse is true of a woman. A man who has proved his manhood to a woman does not need to be afraid he will appear effeminate if he also gives expression to a natural love of tenderness and beauty. And a woman who has proved her womanhood can venture to take an interest in supposedly masculine preoccupations such as athletics or world affairs.

"Feminine" or Childish

For that matter, the plain truth is that most qualities commonly called "feminine" are really childish. It is childish, not womanly,

for instance, to prefer a sheltered life, free of such harsh necessities as earning one's own living—so childish, indeed, that I believe a man takes needless chances when he marries a girl who never has been self-supporting. It is childish, not womanly, to form one's opinions on the basis of unconscious association of ideas—that is, "intuition"—rather than by conscious, reasoned thinking, though one must admit that reason is so often misused or distorted that a woman's intuition may come nearer the truth than a man's judgment (A child is notoriously often better able to "size up" a stranger than an adult is.)

One reason why many women are emotionally childish is that they have never had to grow up. But another is that most men like them better that way. Because of the fear of women's power to say "No" which we men have carried over from the days when we were literally at our mothers' mercy, all too few of us feel comfortable with a woman over whom we do not have some counterbalancing advantage. If she happens to be younger, to know less about practical or scientific matters, or to be emotionally less mature, that seems to give us a much-needed reassurance. The fact that the average woman feels herself already at a disadvantage because of her sex (or, in childish terms, because she is castrated) is one which not many men grasp. And yet the man who can master his infantile fears sufficiently to enjoy being married to a woman he can accept as equal will achieve the most perfect of all personal relationships: true friendship, plus the oneness that only a satisfying sexual union can give.

Must you Tire of Each Other?

Still another superstition which needs very much to be exploded is that after a certain length of time a married couple will inevitably grow tired of each other. True, you will get tired if you have to live year after year with the same person, but this does not happen unless one or both of you stop growing! And why should you? You will stand still only if you rate security above growth, and refuse to face new ideas or new situations because they might be "unsettling" to the peace of mind you have attained with so much effort and frequently on the basis of so much unconscious self-deception. If a husband

and wife find after a few years that they have nothing left to talk about when they are alone together, that can only mean that they have closed minds and would soon be as much bored by a new partner, once their little stock of *clichés* was exhausted. Whatever life these days may be like, and as terrifying as some aspects of it certainly are, it is still exciting and perennially interesting, and there should be no one with whom you can share your interest in it as completely as your wife or husband.

The two most lastingly effective ties between a married couple are, in fact, community of interest and community of pleasure. One of the less noticed factors in the current decay of American marriage is that it has come to be so rare for a man and his wife to work together, or even to know the details of each other's routine occupations. I believe the reason why so many "arranged" marriages in other countries are successful is that husband and wife work together and thus build a common set of interests and ambitions. When Monsieur spends his days in the kitchen of the family café, while Madame sits at the cash desk, they become a "team" in a sense it is hard to equal with John going to the office and spending his energy on business details about which Mary knows nothing, while Mary is occupied with household affairs of which John knows still less. Here, in fact, is the great reason why raising a family can do so much to cement a marriage—it provides that common goal which is so much more unifying than either romantic love or "duty."

We must not forget, however, that love is an outgrowth of the wish for pleasure, so that the more pleasure of any and all types married people can share, the deeper their love is likely to be. To be able to "have fun" together is no less important to a married couple than to work together. And common pursuits and recreations must not be neglected in the interest of things conventionally thought more important. There is no reason why a woman cannot learn to enjoy most of the things a man does, or vice versa; and remember that the more things you can learn to enjoy—even things as foreign to your bringing up as household decoration is to most men, or prize-fighting to most women—the richer and happier your life will be. One major advantage in the fact that you must marry someone of the opposite sex is the opportunity this provides of broadening your viewpoint and supplying new resources for enjoyment.

What does "Faithfulness" Mean?

As I have said, the main reason why we marry rather than attempt to satisfy our need of love and sex through casual relations is our wish for someone whom we can be sure of and secure with. This, however, ought to be a positive and active feeling, resting on your certainty that you and your wife or husband love each other, not on the idea that neither of you would dare try to "cheat" the other. Since the subject keeps recurring in the comic strips ("Mr. and Mrs.," for example), I suppose there must be wives whose sense of security depends on their husbands' literally "never looking at another woman," even with the momentary flash of admiration and sexual interest any pretty girl awakes in any normal man who sees her. And, of course, these very women forget how much of essentially the same sort of "looking" they do every time they go to the movies. Yet any mature man realizes that a girl's being pretty doesn't mean she'd be worth leaving home for, or even that she'd be fun to go to bed with, and no man who has a real love for his wife would be any more tempted to drop her for someone whom he had just met than he would to go back on an old friend of his own sex for a chance acquaintance.

There is no subject on which it is harder to lay down set rules than that of what constitutes real "faithfulness" in marriage. But I will say that between any two people, the fewer fixed rules there are, the better. For as certainly as happiness creates love, fear, restriction, and a sense of guilt destroy it. What will hold you and your wife or husband most effectively together is *what you mean to each other*, and if this is what it can be, each year will make you less aware of any feeling of restriction in remaining true to each other, and more joyously certain that "there's no place like home."

CHAPTER XIII

IF YOUR MARRIAGE GOES WRONG

IF YOUR MARRIAGE IS UNHAPPY, I believe you should be absolutely free to get a divorce if you want one; indeed I think this "fifth freedom" is as vital as the others. When or if the world is truly civilized, it may even be agreed that the most barbarous institution of the first half of the twentieth century was *compulsory marriage*. And by this I mean a situation in which men and women are required by law to live as husband and wife against the will of both or either of them. In fact, much as has been written about the absurdity of our divorce laws, the supreme irony is that not one state yet recognizes that the final reason for letting two people separate is that they want to.

Was anything more degrading about even chattel slavery than the fact that it so frequently involved a woman's being forced to submit to the sexual embraces of a man whom she detested? Yet millions of women called free are to-day under the same compulsion for legal, economic, and even religious reasons. Nor is the position of the decent, law-abiding man who must depend for release of his sexual tensions on a woman who has no attraction for him or makes no pretence of doing more than "submit" to his desires much more to be envied. A relationship of this sort is not only an obscene caricature of life's highest delight; it creates a special and peculiar type of hatred beyond any other than can exist between two people.

Marvin J, for instance, had been brought up with religious scruples against divorce which kept him for years tied to a wife who was completely frigid and who either used his sexual needs, prostitute fashion, to extract whatever luxuries she fancied at the moment, or else sneered at him for having such "beastly" desires. In the end, he told me: "I got so that just to have her come into the room would literally nauseate me. I used to lie awake dreaming up ways to kill her—and I don't doubt she felt much the same about me. I finally realized that no divorce could be so bad, even for the children, as living in

such an atmosphere, so I told her if she did not free me I would simply skip the country."

Paradoxically, Marvin's wife had asked him to let her divorce him years before when they were childless, and he had refused, partly from moral cowardice (which he called "religious principles") and partly because, as proved to be the case, he knew that a divorce would wreck his cherished career as an educator. Had he dared—and been free—to do what both of them really wanted, they would have been saved years of misery and searing hatred. For the fact is, these were people who should not have married in the first place and had actually done so only because neither had the courage to break an engagement based on guilt and shame over an adolescent "petting party." As far as their major interests were concerned, they had nothing in common, and the sense of being "tied" unwillingly to each other had not only always been repugnant but had doubtless been a major factor in their sexual maladjustment.

Will Strong Ties mean Safety?

But what of two people who do love each other? Does not having the law recognize that they "belong" to each other help create the feeling of security which, as we have seen, is necessary to a happy marriage? I know there are many men and women who believe so: in fact I have heard a husband say that he was glad his wife was "possessive" because of the safe feeling that it gave him.

There is something to be said for this position in a world made up of people, most of whom are more or less neurotic, and subject to "moods" in which the repressed side of their natures every now and then takes over. There are probably few couples who do not have moments when they wish that they had never married—anyhow, each other—and many don't hesitate to say so. Under these conditions it would make life too uncertain to be tolerable for a wife, especially, to feel her husband could "walk out" on her any time he happened to feel like it, and divorce should certainly be deferred in all cases till the couple have had time to think it over—or perhaps until some agency or understanding expert has been given a chance to help them see if they cannot adjust their difficulties

But how can an adult man or woman seriously want to live with a marriage partner against her or his will? To begin with, an unwilling union must involve sexual frustration, except as a sort of mutual masturbation which inevitably becomes repulsive. And the mental atmosphere of a home in which either parent is there only because he *has* to be (even though the compulsion grows out of a sense of duty) will be deadlier for the children than the direst poverty or hardship. Physically or emotionally, the only real marriage is one which not only was contracted but is maintained on the basis of free will and active preference on both sides, and if you do not have and cannot achieve such a marriage, you have little hope of happiness until you regain your freedom, no matter at what cost.

Is It too late to Start Over?

But what makes you think your marriage cannot be a real one? Are you sure, however far apart you may have drifted, that it is too late to make a fresh start?

Basically, this will depend upon two things: how willing you are to see your problem from a new, more adult viewpoint; and how largely the "associations" which you and your partner have for each other are predominantly pleasurable. For what anybody really "means" to you is the sum of what your memory associates with him. Each year—and each day—that any two people live together, their meaning for each other is enriched or poisoned by the ways in which they help to make each other happy or unhappy. And remember, *nothing is forgotten*; neither harsh words nor caresses; neither disillusionments nor moments of pride and satisfaction. So before deciding that you would be happier divorced, sit down and list, first, all the things you like to remember in connection with your partner, and then all the things that hurt or irritate you. How does the account balance? On the whole, does he or she "mean" happiness, or frustration, fear, and anger?

If the latter is true—if your husband or wife is primarily associated in your mind with disillusionment and pain—there is probably not much use in thinking of a fresh start. Over a sufficiently long time, even two pretty decent and well-meaning people may pile up so large a mass of grievances against each

other that there's nothing to be done but call it quits and hope to do better in another marriage. A man, for example, whose wife has consistently belittled him in public may never again be able to have confidence in himself in her presence, even though she realizes her mistake and tries to correct it; just as a wife may never be able to feel safe and relaxed with a husband who was sexually cruel for a long time. In such cases the same sort of situation has developed as in the relation of most grown-ups with their parents; even those who have achieved the most complete sense of maturity with other people may still, through the strength of old associations, feel like children with father or mother.

You must not forget, however, that the freedom a divorce will give you is expensive both in money and in other ways that matter still more. Breaking up a home is not an easy undertaking, even though to-day one does not have to face the social criticism he would once have had to endure; and, particularly for a woman, being a divorcée is a lonely and often humiliating business. On the other hand, where it is really necessary, a divorce is worth what it costs, and I do not think there is any solid ground for the common opinion that people who have been divorced are less happy in their second marriages than if the first one had not gone wrong. On the contrary, I can testify that some of the happiest marriages I know are those of people, one or both of whom are graduates of the divorce court. Most of us may be less willing to learn from experience than we should be, but we do learn something—or the world would stand still

Reckoning the Score

But suppose you decide that on the whole your partner's score in your mind's reckoning is on the credit side, and believe he or she feels the same way, how can you get back on the old footing? Or, more accurately—since the past can never quite be re-created—how can you find a new relation which will be as satisfying as the old one, and eventually more so? You can almost certainly do this if, to put the question in the simplest terms, you still *like* each other.

In the first place, you are starting with odds in your favour. You are not only doing something which you think will make

you happy if you succeed at it, you are doing what *has* made you happy when you did it before, so that you are justified in feeling that your hopes have a real basis. There are many minor difficulties you would have to face if you were starting married life with a new partner which are comfortably behind you—you and your mate know each other's habits and have got used to some of each other's foibles. You already have a mass of interests in common, and a circle of friends who accept you and with whom you feel at home. More important still, you have presumably come nearer to the point of being willing to accept each other as you are, instead of dreaming that you may be able to change human nature and resenting the discovery that you cannot. To put it prosaically, just as you might have decided to stay in your present home instead of moving, even though you always wished it had a better bathroom or a more convenient kitchen, so you have decided that your husband's admirable qualities more than make up for his resistance to going to parties where he has to dress up, or that your wife's amiable disposition outweighs her not-too-exciting cooking. (It is true you might find that once you have "taken off the pressure," the changes you hoped for will come, anyhow, but your best chance of having that happen is not to count on it.)

But since you have chosen to stay together for the happiness you think it will bring you, watch out not to go back to the effort to get what you want from each other by appeals to duty or a sense of moral obligation. Remember, if you are a woman, that whatever your husband does for you because you make him feel he has to, he will do resentfully, and ultimately hate you for compelling him to do, while what he does for the satisfaction that it gives him or because he thinks it "fair" will bring you just so much closer to each other. If you are a man, bear the same facts in mind about your wife, particularly in her sex life. Look for richness and depth of emotion in it rather than mere frequency of satisfaction. If John doesn't feel like intercourse on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and Mary dislikes the thought of it on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, they had better get along with Sundays than make what should be a pleasure a "chore" any other night in the week. For the memory of that other night will stick in the mind of whichever one was the unwilling partner and wind up by spoiling even

Sundays. The one time when you should ever let yourself make love to please your partner is when you are in a mood where at least the idea of doing something that will give him (or her) pleasure will bring you happiness also.

No "Forgiveness"

Another equally important point is that there be no question of "forgiving" anything that either of you has done to hurt or frustrate the other. The partner who begs and receives pardon for some "wrong" he has done is in an impossible position from the standpoint of self-respect, and without self-respect love will perish. Pardon alone cannot wipe out the sense of guilt that makes you sue for it and you cannot in the long run help but feel humiliation and anger toward the person to whom you have confessed yourself morally inferior. Many an unlucky man has made himself a slave for life by accepting the "forgiveness" of a wife who "forgives but cannot forget" and uses her memory of what he has "made her suffer" as a club with which to batter him into submission any time she feels the need to have him in her power.

But what is more, forgiving is a psychological impossibility as long as you feel anyone has really "wronged" you. Whenever the wrong comes back to mind, the hatred and resentment it aroused will come back with it. If a person has done something to hurt you, the one way to keep that fact from being a permanent barrier between you is to *understand what made him do it* and try to make sure whatever caused his action will not happen again. For indeed the realistic recognition that people do not do unkind things because they are basically mean or wicked, but because of some misunderstanding or inner compulsion, will make the whole issue of "forgiveness" meaningless and help you to discard it.

Cynthia W, through no conscious fault of her own, was sexually frigid. One important reason for this was the sense of guilt she had developed out of having been unable as an adolescent to resist the urge to masturbation, though she did not realize this until considerably later. All she knew was that she suffered bitterly from sexual frustration and from shame at

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her inability to be a "real woman." The fact that her failure also disappointed Jack, her husband, to whom she was deeply devoted, was almost "the last straw."

Jack loved Cynthia also, but suffered in his turn from doubts of his manhood based on his experience in a former marriage to a wife who had repeatedly insisted he did not have "what it takes to give a woman a thrill." Theoretically, Jack knew he was not responsible for Cynthia's difficulties, but in practice he could not help feeling that if he were "man enough," he would be able to arouse and satisfy her, and in time this sense of sexual inadequacy brought on actual impotence, so complete as to make him feel his life was over and think seriously of self-destruction.

It was at this point that the inevitable "other woman" came into the picture. Indeed, it is only when a marriage is in trouble that a third person can harm it. Louise was in no sense a home-breaker, but her marriage also was unhappy and she fell in love with Jack and offered herself to him with an unreserved surrender which he never before had imagined.

The effect upon Jack's sexual self-confidence of Louise's adoration was almost miraculous, and with some misgivings he embarked upon a love affair, reassuring himself, as most men do in this sort of situation, with the thought that what Cynthia did not know could not hurt her. But the strain of the deception ultimately proved more than he could bear, and he broke down and told Cynthia the whole story.

Here was where, according to tradition, Cynthia should not only have been brokenhearted, but have felt her self-respect demanded that she start for Reno at once. But, while she was deeply hurt, she knew Jack too well to regard him as a heartless villain, and not only loved but liked him too much to be willing to divorce him, especially since he had assured her he had never ceased to love her nor let Louise think that his relation with her was more than it was. After full and frank discussion, Cynthia promised to see whether something more effectual could not be done about her difficulties if Jack would be patient until she had had a chance to make the effort. She embarked upon a psychoanalysis, one of the first effects of which was to make her sexually normal, and to-day she and her husband are as happy as any two people can be, and have just about

forgotten that Louise ever existed. (She, too, solved her problem in her own way, but that is another story.)

But important as it is to understand your partner, the real key to a fresh start in marriage—as in everything else—is *self-knowledge*. From a natural and childish standpoint, your first impulse always will be to maintain that the other person was to blame for anything that went wrong, and you will find evidence enough to “prove” this if you are looking for it. But remember that if all the fault were really on your partner’s side, there would be no point in your trying to get on with so impossible a person, and the very fact that you are making a fresh start makes it self-evident that you know better when you see the situation as an adult. You know very well that there are “faults on both sides” or, rather, that both of you have used the wrong methods and have sometimes acted childishly. The next step is to accept the fact that it is *your* blunders rather than your partner’s which it’s up to you to recognize and to stop making. And by now I hope that you have grasped the idea that the way to do this is not by determination and will power, but by understanding. If I seem to emphasize the “blunders,” it is again because I believe so firmly that once you have ceased doing the wrong things, you will automatically tend to do the right ones. As a help toward your task of self-criticism, let me list some of the mistakes most frequently made in marriage, first by women, then by men, and then equally by both or either.

Where Women go wrong in Marriage

As has already been said, nearly every woman starts life with a more or less unconscious grievance at having been born a female—that is, at having no penis. Many little girls even believe that they once had the magic organ and were robbed of it—perhaps by their mothers. But a person who believes himself unjustly treated automatically seeks redress and restitution, and long after she has outgrown and forgotten her infantile penis envy the average woman retains the emotion that envy arouses in the form of an obsession with her “rights” and a determination to see that she gets them. Making due allowance for the possibility that I, too, may not be wholly free from masculine bias, I venture to suggest that the point at which American marriage

went wrong was the start of the campaign for "woman's rights" and particularly for the so-called "equal standard of morality." From the standpoint of basic justice, it could hardly be denied that it is "unfair" for a man to be allowed more freedom in sex matters than a woman. Yet nowhere on earth except in the English-speaking countries, and especially in the United States, has there ever been a serious effort to enforce the same rules on both sexes, and nowhere on earth has marriage got into such serious difficulties. For one thing, since the attempt to impose premarital continence upon men has been an utter failure, the main effect of the "single standard" has been to encourage girls to undertake sexual experiments which have, on the whole, led to much more unhappiness than satisfaction. But even more serious results, I fear, have followed the attempt of married women to impose upon their husbands by force—moral, if not legal—a degree of "faithfulness" never expected of men before.

So far as the male is concerned, it is of the very essence of the sexual impulse that the sex act shall seem to be something the man does on his own initiative and by his own free choice. So, however "true" he might have been to his wife as long as he felt that his fidelity was based on his preferring her to all other women, the moment a man begins to feel that it is she, not he, who says where he must look for pleasure, all or nearly all the pleasure is gone, and what should have been delight becomes a duty. So far as the male's unspoken feelings go, the female who has always envied him his manhood has now managed to deprive him of it—or at least the right to use it as he pleases. Now, if, as the Kinsey Report tells us, half of all American husbands are unfaithful to their wives at one time or another, I believe the greatest reason is their need to prove to themselves that they are still owners of their manhood, whereas, in too many cases, the men who have not dared to assert their independence have ended by losing their virility entirely. And, of course, the average young man's reluctance to be married turns on the same issue. On the other hand, I doubt whether sexual freedom means much to a woman except as a symbol of the privileges she has been cheated out of. Basically, she needs to feel she is *wanted* and if she knows she is wanted by a man she cares for, she has little natural inclination to look elsewhere.

The Wife's Problem

Basically, then, the problem of the wife is to decide whether her unquestioned "right" to be her husband's only source of sexual satisfaction is worth claiming in view of what making the claim too aggressively may do to them both. And the same is true of her no less unquestioned right to "play around" with other members of the opposite sex if her husband seems inclined to do so. As a man, I would not presume to impose an answer to these questions upon any woman; I can only say that if "justice" does not agree with the realities of human nature—and no one, I admit, has yet seen human nature unwarped by anxiety and guilt—the adult thing to do is to adjust yourself to the *facts*, and let the "principles" go. And one fact which I am in no doubt of is that the more a man feels he is being faithful to his wife from choice, not from compulsion or moral obligation, the more likely he will be both to be true to her and to be a sexually satisfying lover.

Of course one of the main things that tempt a woman to become "possessive" in her attitude toward her husband—or her children—is the lessened recognition given by society to her role as a home-maker. Especially if she has not too much money, to-day's housewife may still feel she is overworked and "driven," but she has much less of a variety of tasks, and less interesting ones, than her grandmother or the woman of a century ago. My mother, for instance, when she was first married would have been ashamed to let her husband wear a "store-bought" shirt, even with evening dress. And her mother at least superintended tasks such as weaving, soap-making, candle-dipping, and a dozen others. Besides, in those days a wife and mother was not tempted to compare herself with or be patronized by "career women." To-day the whole picture has been changed by the way in which conscious or unconscious sexual jealousy has come to set the standards by which many women judge themselves and one another, so that it is the girl who competes successfully with men rather than the one who is a happy and competent housewife who is envied and looked up to by the other members of her own sex.

I cannot, however, agree with those who believe the answer is to try to turn the clock back and urge women to find all their

satisfaction in housekeeping and child-bearing. There are plenty of careers—or at least useful and important occupations—which a woman can adopt without neglecting her housewifely duties. And if she can add to her sense of her own value by being a part of the community and feel that she is doing worthwhile work, her husband and children will benefit almost as much as she will because of the poise and peace of mind all this will give her. Let us not sneer at women's clubs and civic organizations because much that they do is still fumbling and amateurish: they are necessary stages in woman's attempt to find her place in a new and materially altered world.

Peculiarly Male Marriage Blunders

If a woman's envy of her husband's masculinity is her most frequent obstacle to happiness in marriage, a man's is undoubtedly his difficulty in remembering that his wife is not and cannot be "a mother to him"—at least in the sense in which the childish part of him desires. And again, what makes this harder is that in America the mother plays so much larger a part in her son's life than has ever been true elsewhere. If you as a husband have the idea that your wife will or should make the "sacrifices" for you, or give you the uncritical admiration and approval you got from the usual adoring mother, you are heading into trouble.

For why should she? A mother's devotion to her children is based at least partly on the sense of power she gets from their needing her so desperately. When they are very little they quite literally cannot live without her, and she knows it. But not only are you far from being as dependent on your wife as a child on its mother—your wife wants you to be "at her mercy" even less than you do in your thinking moments. By instinct, at any rate, she wants to be taken care of, catered to, and "courted"; not merely to be a person you fall back on when you are in trouble. An amusing side of married life to an outside observer is the way many a wife and husband unconsciously vie with each other for the role of "baby." This comes out perhaps most clearly in the case of minor illnesses, with John fighting to get Mary to accept his cold as more important and deserving of more coddling than her headache. I have even known comparatively

adult couples who were frank about this and would say to each other: "To-night it's my turn to be babied."

Again, it is the man's wish to make a mother of his wife that makes him quail before her moral judgments. When Gilbert K. Chesterton said, "Every good man is afraid of his wife," he was not really talking of a wife, but of a mother—since it was from Mother that most of us got our first ideas of right and wrong, and it was she whom we accepted as the arbiter of our behaviour. Yet while some wives seem to like this side of "playing mother" for the power it gives them, I doubt whether many of them are as happy in it as they appear. What a woman really looks for when she marries is a *man*, not the proverbial "little boy" so many women call their husbands. I would even wager that the average wife would rather have her husband tell her quietly that he is going out for an evening with the boys than ask her permission.

For that matter, it is his identification of his wife with Mother that makes the average man so insistent on her sexual "purity" and on her coming to him as a virgin. For nothing is more distressing to a small boy than the idea that his mother not only bids him good-night and goes to bed with Father but—perish the thought!—enjoys it. The still persistent impression on some men's part that "nice girls" do not have sexual desires is an effort to blot out the overwhelming jealousy and rage with which they react to the idea of Mother's having had such feelings about Father. And the ideal of the girl one wants to marry being "as pure as ice—and as cold" stems from the same childish refusal to face the reality of parental sex relations.

Yet, while there are men who carry this refusal so far that a normal sexual response from their wives shocks them, many more expect the virgins they insist on marrying to be transformed suddenly into accomplished lovers the night of the wedding. Balzac put this all too clearly in his dictum that the ideal wife is "a courtesan to her husband and a nun to everyone else." Yet, wise as he was, he seems not to have realized the impossibility of any woman living up to such a contradiction.

Mistakes of Both Sexes

One lesson which every husband and wife must learn if they hope to be happy is that they "cannot have things both ways."

Nothing could be truer than the old French saying that everyone has the "defects of his qualities" If the things you like about your husband or wife imply other things which you find painful or unpleasant, you must take the bitter with the sweet and get used to them

Elsa J's pet peeve had always been that when she went out with a man, he either talked about himself or tried to make love to her. Then she met a brilliant and good-looking writer of short stories, David M., and for the first time enjoyed the thrill of having someone take an interest in *her* feelings and ideas. Dave not only sympathized with Elsa's bitterness at how stupid most men were about women, but paid her the critical and individualized compliments that a girl likes so much better than just being told that she looks beautiful or well-dressed. He would say, "You should always wear that colour, it brings out the lights in your hair," or, "The reason I would rather dance with you than any other girl is that you have such a sense of rhythm."

What Elsa did not see until after she was married to him was that Dave's "understanding"—like all understanding—was the product of experience. He had learned about women the only way a man can—from women; and marriage did not mean he intended to break off his education. He truly loved Elsa, but whenever they went to a party, he was pretty sure to meet some new girl who intrigued him, and was just as likely to come in late for dinner next day because—as he didn't bother to deny—he had been having cocktails with her.

Having grown up with a rather jealous disposition, Elsa had some pretty bad hours, and these weren't helped by the pitying looks other wives gave her when her husband danced attendance on some fascinating stranger. But she learned eventually that it was his newer interests, not her, of whom David always tired in a short while. And the realization of the depth of understanding he and she shared ultimately made her see how much more satisfying for *her* was a man like David than the sort of steady-going he-man in whose life no woman—not even his wife—could ever mean as much as his business or his golf game.

Peter D. had had a mother who openly wore the family trousers. A Phi Beta Kappa from one of the leading women's colleges, the executive ability she used in managing her husband and children would have qualified her to head a department

store Once he got away from home, Peter, quite naturally, hesitated about getting married, but at last, when nearly forty he fell head over heels in love with a blonde debutante some twenty years his junior, whose "cuteness" and "helplessness" he simply could not resist

You can perhaps guess the rest of the old story—Polly's inability to balance her cheque-book or be on time for appointments, the way she burst into tears when something she had "tried so hard" to cook turned out a soggy, tasteless mess; her total lack of interest in any conversation except gossip, and the other qualities a girl is bound to have when it has always seemed to get her more to be a baby than to try to grow up. The marriage would pretty certainly have gone on the rocks had Peter not had the good fortune to consult a member of one of the newest professions, a trained "marriage counsellor," who made him realize that he was getting only what he'd asked for and believed he wanted. a wife who would never dare to try to boss him. Fortunately, Polly wasn't stupid, and once Peter learned to coax rather than drive her into using her mind instead of relying on her "cuteness," they got on extremely well together Peter occasionally wishes he could have someone to talk to about subjects which his wife finds "boring," but the kick he gets from realizing that she regards his opinions as the last word about everything from bridge to atom bombs is something he is honest enough to admit he wouldn't want to give up.

The idea of going to a marriage counsellor (if you can find a good one) is worth thinking about for most couples who have difficulties or misunderstandings. But if you do consult such a person, don't regard him as a sort of umpire and spend your time trying to get him on your side of whatever dispute you are having; for this is one case where you have everything to lose by "winning." Unless you are going to give up your marriage, what you want is not to get the better of your partner, but to *get together with him*, and this means that you should look for the strong points of his position and the weak ones of yours. You can even make a counsellor unnecessary if, whenever you feel wronged or abused, you will sit down and try to see what excuses or justifications you would offer for your conduct *if you were the person who has wronged you*

When Honesty is no Virtue

The fetish of being "honest" is another snag on which your marriage may have foundered. Certainly you and your partner should be honest about your essential feeling toward each other and not pretend that you "don't care" if you seriously feel that you have been unkindly or unfairly treated. But nothing is more misleading than the kind of frankness which some married people pride themselves on exercising toward each other. In the first place, being frank may be too easy a way of excusing to yourself what really are sadistic jabs at each other, but even when this is not so, anything you say is apt to be interpreted as harsher than you meant it to be. True love makes even the most mature person vulnerable, and it is harder to take criticism from a person whose approval matters deeply to you than from someone who means nothing to you. If you will remember that your partner feels the same way, you'll "go easy," and temper your fault-finding with kindness—which in any case will ultimately prove to be the more effective method.

Probably the most subtly selfish misuse of "honesty" is letting it justify your hurting someone else to ease your conscience. If you have done something of which you are ashamed and which it would hurt your partner to know, don't tell him or her about it unless doing so will serve some purpose. For example, unless there is reason to believe you would be thought guilty of deception, keep your mouth shut about any love affairs you had before your marriage, and under no circumstances let yourself be tempted to go into needless detail about them. To confess and be absolved may be a relief to your feelings—just as it was when you broke down and told Mother about having used a naughty word—but it will not help your marriage; for your partner will remember always what it helps you forget.

A Baby is no Solution

Finally, if you feel that you and your partner are drifting apart, don't make the tragic blunder of imagining that having a baby will draw you together again. It is much more likely to have the effect it had on George and Emily S.

From Emily's standpoint, George's love seemed to be cooling off to an alarming degree. He not only had ceased paying her

the small attentions that had warmed her heart before their marriage but was spending far too many evenings with his men friends. Worst of all, it struck her that the tone of voice in which he spoke of the new blonde at the office was much too frankly admiring. She decided that having a baby would be the best way to get George back and "hold" him to his duties. But because she was not sure he would approve of the idea, she did something no wife ever should do: she deliberately neglected the precautions against pregnancy which she let George assume she was taking.

The result was, George's first reaction to the knowledge that he was to be a father was the exact opposite of what Emily had hoped for. He was thoroughly angry and accused her of taking advantage of him. And the inconvenience (to him) of her pregnancy, to say nothing of the expense of the baby's birth, only increased his resentment. At first when the baby came he felt the usual pride of the young father, but that soon succumbed to his distaste at loss of sleep, the smell of drying diapers, and Elsa's preoccupation with the small son to whom she grew more and more devoted the less interest George showed in him—or her. True, George was too "decent" to walk out on the responsibilities he felt had been foisted on him, but he became more indifferent than ever, and the marriage, while it has not been, and probably never will be, broken, has deteriorated into the too-common round of endless bickering and reproaches. George spends just as little time at home as he can, and while physical necessity has driven him to father two more children, he gets scarcely more enjoyment from his sex life than his wife does. Emily is an over-devoted mother, trying to get from her children the emotional satisfaction she cannot find in her marriage, and consoling herself with self-pity and complaints to her friends of what "selfish brutes" men are.

Yet had George and Emily waited until after they had straightened out their personal relations—which had gone wrong in the first place through sexual ignorance and guilt on both sides—they not only might be happy to-day, but might have had a family which they could have enjoyed together, and in the enjoyment of which they would have found a deep and enduring bond. For mature men and women desire children, both because their natural instincts point in that direction, and

because they find a conscious inspiration in the thought of doing the most useful and important job two human beings can do. But parenthood is or should be the post-graduate course of married life, and ought not to be attempted until we have learned the lessons that precede it. For this reason no young couple should be forced by ignorance of contraceptive methods to have a child during the first year of marriage unless they are ready for it and want it for valid, adult reasons.

Conclusions

To sum up, the basic principles on which a marriage must be either built or rebuilt might be stated like this.

1. The one way to "hold" a husband or a wife is by remembering that the lasting bond between two people is that of shared satisfactions and pleasures enjoyed together. As long as home is the place where you are happiest, day in and day out, neither of you will be seriously tempted to stray from it, and your delight in it will grow more intense as your minds and characters develop.

2. Miracles don't happen, and there's no use hoping for them or feeling aggrieved when they do not come your way. It is to the sort of person that your partner is, not what you think he or she should be, that you must look for whatever happiness marriage can bring you. Yet if you keep looking for the best in him or in her you will find far more of it than you knew was there before you faced the situation in this adult manner. Happy marriage is not an event, still less a piece of good luck; it is a *job* at which you will have to keep on working every day of your life. But no other job on earth "pays off" so richly in security and happiness as this one.

PART FOUR

GROWING WITH YOUR CHILDREN

CHAPTER XIV

CHILDREN CAN BE WORTH WHAT THEY COST

WHY SHOULD ANYONE WANT to have children with things as they are to-day?

This is not an altogether foolish question.

For one thing, there is the matter of the sort of world a child born at this time will have to deal with when he grows up, although I doubt—at least in this country—whether this is often a decisive issue from the parents' standpoint. Most Americans are constitutionally optimistic enough to feel that the global mess will work itself out somehow, and where fear of "what a child will have to face" is given as a reason for not having children, I suspect this usually is a rationalization of other and possibly unconscious hesitations.

Much more serious is the fact that on the whole a child no longer represents two major aspects of self-interest which he once embodied. Especially to the city-dweller, children are no longer economic assets; they must be supported at very heavy expense until they are old enough to go out and work for someone else, and while when that time comes the law gives you title to their wages until they are twenty-one, asserting this claim may alienate them from you, besides running counter to popular standards. Unless they support you in your old age—which is both a painful thought to self-respecting parents and in any case too dubious to count on—each child you have will embody a large net financial loss with a corresponding sacrifice of other pleasures. Many parents each year ask each other. "Shall we have a baby or buy a new car?" And rather often "A car" is the answer.

More than this, if you are modern-minded, there are many kinds of ego satisfaction people once got from their children

which you will feel obliged to forgo. You will not enjoy the feeling of authority and power Grandpa got from making Father "toe the scratch." You must not expect your children when they grow up to agree with your opinions, even on such vital subjects as politics and religion. You cannot be sure that they will "follow in your footsteps" by adopting your profession—or the one you have always wished you had chosen. As one out of many mothers complained, "You work and slave for them for some twenty years and just when they start to be 'real company' they fall in love and get married, go away and leave you, and you cannot even pay more than a casual visit in their new homes without being made to feel you are intruding."

Yet, in spite of birth control, most married couples go on having children—although not so many of them—for their own good, if often unconscious reasons. To begin with, there is probably no normal woman who does not have at least an unconscious wish to be a mother. The urge to conceive appears to be as basic in the female of the species as the sex urge itself—in fact, the two urges are inextricably intermingled so that it is doubtful whether one can be completely satisfied while the other is starved. I have heard menstrual cramps described by a psychiatrist as "the protest of a disappointed uterus." And it certainly is true that women who have not had children usually suffer more severely physically as well as emotionally when the menstrual function ceases.

But, besides this, motherhood is the best and in most cases the one real solution of the average woman's deepest emotional problem, penis envy. It is the one cure for wishing she had been a man and feeling inferior because she isn't. For in bringing a new life into the world, a woman does what no man can do and what in its way is more important and far-reaching in its possibilities than any achievement of the male sex. It is even theoretically possible (it has actually been done with rabbits) that the human race might some day be perpetuated without male co-operation, but were there no women willing to be mothers, human life would end within a generation. In fact, there is no small basis for the idea that man's "creativeness" in other fields, from poetry to atomic physics, has partly expressed his need to compensate for the fact that he cannot create that supreme miracle—a baby.

Whether men have the same instinctive urge to become fathers that women have to be mothers is extremely doubtful. Nature stirs them to plant the seed of life but gives them no automatic interest in whether or not it bears fruit. Indeed, to the childish-minded male the baby his wife bears is more apt to represent a rival (perhaps like the younger brother who once stole his mother's affection from him) than a source of pleasure or even importance

On the other hand, the truly adult person, male or female, finds in parenthood the final satisfaction of that impulse which beyond all other elements in human nature may be properly called Godlike, and in which, if anywhere, whatever "Power" lies behind the universe is manifested, the creative instinct. To be able to make something which will go as long as you are there to keep it going—like an automobile or an airplane—is no small achievement; but to create something which, once you have got it started, will keep going by itself and even end by reaching greater heights than you could hope to achieve is an incomparably greater joy and wonder. From that standpoint, the delight of watching your child grow may be so much more than worth what it costs you that you will find it hard to believe you ever wondered whether you wanted to have one.

And yet, even so you must remember that your child is not your own creation in the sense that a machine—or a poem—would be. As Froebel, originator of the *kinder-garten*, sensed more than a century ago, a child grows *from within out*, and your function is to "tend him" as a gardener does his flowers, not try to force him into patterns that are inconsistent with his nature to suit your ambitions or convenience.

After centuries of deciding in advance what children "ought to be" like, we have at last turned from our wishful thinking to reality, and are trying to learn what they really *are* like and what we can reasonably expect of them. "Child study" is being carried on on a nationwide, even a world-wide scale. At the Yale Clinic for Child Development hundreds of babies and little children have been figuratively put under the microscope by Dr. Arnold Gesell and his staff of trained assistants. Observers go to the children's homes and get acquainted with the parents, and the youngsters are also studied in a nursery where by the use of a one-way screen they can be watched and listened to

without their knowing anyone is around, and where in a "photographic dome" a movie camera records every act and gesture. Similar experiments are being conducted at Iowa State University and on a less elaborate scale by scores of nursery schools the country over. Much has still to be learned, but already psychiatrists and child psychologists have found things out about our babies which not only upset many cherished theories, but have brought new health, happiness, and growth to thousands of youngsters. In fact, it is not too much to say that these workers are on the way to giving us the finest group of little folks that any nation on earth ever has had.

Baby knows Best

The greatest discovery that scientific study of babies has produced is that in most aspects of life *baby knows best*. He himself is our best guide to what he needs and to when he is ready for the next step in the miracle of growth his parents find so endlessly absorbing. Indeed, when that growth is twisted or retarded, it is usually because we have either tried to hurry it or (more or less unconsciously) delayed it by too much help and protection.

Free from physical or mental interference, babies will tend to develop pretty uniformly. A nursery schoolteacher told me that with half an hour's observation she could estimate the age of a new member of her group within a month, or even two weeks. For instance, there is an age (around fifteen months) when the average child can build a "tower" of three blocks, and each month sees more blocks added. But if you urge your child to build a higher tower than he is ready for, he is likely to get discouraged and stop trying; while if you build his towers for him, he will begin to feel he needn't bother—the result in either case being to slow his development and make him seem dull or stupid. And, of course, the same will be true of his putting on his shoes or solving the mystery of buttons.

Conversely, if your baby seems slow, the great probability is that it is owing to circumstances or to some mistake on your part rather than to anything wrong with him, so don't try to prod him, and don't jump at painful conclusions—wait and give him his chance. In *Children in the Family*, Dr Florence Powdermaker and Louise Ireland Grimes say: "The most

important lesson for fathers and mothers is to learn to know their own child; not to have a pattern they expect him to match, whether that pattern be the child's older brother or sister, the neighbour's baby, or the ideal child described by books on child care or by the doctor's chart."

Little Richard D. had neither walked nor spoken up to the time of his second birthday, although other children in his family were inclined to be precocious. He had had a succession of minor illnesses and, what was more important, his mother had also been ill a good deal of the time. Because this was more than forty years ago, even the family doctor believed that the little boy was feeble-minded, and confided to an aunt that it might be a "mercy" if he did not survive his next sick spell. But Richard did survive, and finally caught up on growing, and to-day he has a chair in an important university, besides being more than commonly accomplished as a musician and composer.

Youthful Dieticians

Eating is one of the subjects about which it is hardest for a mother to believe that baby knows best, yet there is reason to believe that, unless it has been spoiled, a child's natural appetite is a better indication of what he needs than any diet his mother could go by. Dr. Clara Davis, first in Cleveland and then in Chicago, tried on a group of children from six to thirteen months old the startling experiment of having them choose their own diet from a varied range of appropriate foods (including cod-liver oil) and permitting them to eat as much or as little as they wanted. After six months all the children were in excellent condition and—even more surprising—the records of what they had eaten showed that over the whole period each one had had a balanced diet, even though one child had horrified them by consuming ten eggs at a sitting. So if your baby refuses his spinach, nine times out of ten it is because he doesn't need it, and the principle applies almost as surely if he won't eat at all. The most probable exception will be that you have made him feel he has to eat to please you; in that case he may overeat when he wants to be sure of your approval, and get "choosy" any time he is annoyed with you for something he thinks you have done to him. The less fuss and confusion you create over his

eating—or anything else he does—the more likely he will be to be able to do what is best for him in the long run.

Toilet Training

I know of no subject on which modern ideas differ more from Grandma's than on that of toilet training, although I regret to say a lot of mothers still boast of the early age at which their babies' diapers no longer need to be changed. Really, though they do not know it, these mothers are thinking of their own convenience more than of the baby's physical or mental welfare. It is possible—and I have seen it done—to train a baby so that it will practically never soil itself by the time it is a month old, but the later consequences may be nothing for a mother to be proud of. For one thing, such stern control at so early an age puts too much strain on undeveloped muscles; but what is even more important, the baby is likely to acquire an exaggerated sense of shame over his natural functions, as well as a feeling that his mother is a harsh taskmistress, more to be feared than to be loved or trusted.

Remember, it is at this point that the baby's instincts and especially his desire for pleasure first come into active conflict with what others demand of him, and to no small degree his attitude toward authority and morals will be shaped for life by the way he comes to feel about adjusting the fulfilment of his natural desires to your wishes. Even though they probably will be repressed later, the resentment and rage of the baby who gets the impression that any attempt to enjoy his natural functions will be punished may make him embittered and neurotic for life.

As far as I can find out, the best child specialists now say that bowel training ought not to be undertaken until the child is at least eight months old, and training in bladder control should come much later. The authors I recently quoted say that there is "no need for parents to worry if a child is not completely trained until near his third birthday," and the worst of all ways to deal with accidents later is to scold the child or try to shame him for them.

Naturally we all want our children to love and admire us, and some of us actually feel they should be grateful, even when

they are little, for "all we do for them," as if it were their fault that they are so dependent on us. As far as the love goes, you need never worry. Your child cannot help loving you instinctively because you are the only source of happiness or safety he knows. But this won't prevent his sometimes getting angry with you nor, unless he is over afraid of you, saying he hates you. Both love and hate are instinctive, and all children fluctuate between them to some extent from moment to moment, depending on how they feel they are being treated.

Observers behind the one-way screen report that altogether normal children play games, when they think they are alone, in which they may lock Mother in the icebox or push Father down the toilet. There is nothing in this to be shocked at, and punishing children for such momentary feelings will only make them repress these feelings into their unconscious minds and create trouble later. Our job is to take such moods in our stride while teaching the children that some of their impulses cannot be carried out without unpleasant consequences

Babies don't Forget

The idea of the critical importance of the first years—and even the first months—of a child's life seems exaggerated, if not out-and-out fantastic, when we first encounter it, largely because most of us cannot remember the beginnings of our own lives and think that what happened then has dropped out of our minds completely. Ask the average person for his earliest recollections, and the chances are he will tell you about going out to Grandma's for Thanksgiving dinner when he was five or six years old. For to most of us the first years of our lives have become a complete blank by the time we reach our teens, except for a few things we are never quite sure whether we remember or recall because someone has told us about them. And when we get to be parents, that blank is likely to fool us rather dangerously. Believing that we've forgotten our own babyhood, we get the idea that our babies won't remember, either. We know we must give them a good start in life by keeping them physically healthy, but often we don't bother about what we do to their minds or their feelings, because, we reason, they'll forget it, anyhow, as soon as they're a little older.

We could not be more mistaken. The truth is that the smallest baby's mind is like a wax mould on which each impression is so sharply etched that nothing ever can erase it. Of course, these impressions aren't *ideas* in the adult sense; they are feelings and associations. And the fact that they are practically pure emotion, unrestrained by either logic or morality, is one reason for their dropping out of conscious recollection as soon as the child begins to think the way adults do.

As the simplest illustration, take fear. There is almost nothing a baby is instinctively afraid of, but all the unreasonable fears that older children and adults have can be traced back to apparently forgotten early memories of pain or terror. If your child is afraid of the dark, of lightning, of strange animals, or what not, it is either because he was actually hurt by something he identifies with what he fears, or because you have taught him to fear it, not so much in words as by example. Show me a child who's afraid of mice, and I'll wager ten to one his mother has a horror of them. And while it would obviously be unwise to bring up a baby to be literally fearless (he might burn the house down, for example), we ought to be pretty careful just what and how much fear we implant in his mind.

Understanding the importance of a baby's first impressions has killed most of the ideas of scientific child care that were popular around the time when germs were first discovered. Maybe kissing is unsanitary (and, needless to say, a baby ought not to be kissed by strangers), but a baby who goes unloved suffers more harm than the average germ could cause him. It's absolutely necessary to a baby's mental health, not only that his mother (or whoever tries to take her place) should love him, but that he should be made to feel her love in the only ways that mean anything to him—by caresses, fondling, and other demonstrations of affections such as any normal loving mother will indulge in. There are two good reasons for this:

The effect of the growth impulse in a normal person is to make him look increasingly *outside himself* for ways to satisfy his need of pleasure, but how fully and intelligently he will do this depends largely upon whether his first impression of the world is that it is a friendly place, where he can find the satisfactions he wants if he looks for them intelligently. And since these satisfactions are at first entirely sensuous—or "sexual" in the

Freudian sense—there is nothing a child needs quite as much as to have Mother represent to him a source of sensuous delight which he can count on. Unkissed babies literally almost never achieve normal sexual feeling when they grow up—or, indeed, normal emotions generally. This is so true that an eminent authority, Dr. William Goldfarb, categorically states that babies placed in institutions during the first six months of their lives, even though well-cared for physically, never achieve real emotional adjustment, no matter what efforts are made later to replace what they missed

Don't imagine that a child's "remembering" things depends upon his understanding them in the grown-up sense. A mother I will call Mrs. K. was in a very tough spot indeed. With a baby just a year old and another coming, she had to see her beloved husband taken to a sanitarium for a mental ailment from which his recovery was doubtful. Feeling utterly alone in the world and secure in her belief that her baby was too little to understand, she developed the habit of pouring out her anxiety and grief in the child's ears. "It can't hurt her," she said, "and it does help so much to have *somebody* to talk to."

But thirty years later, when the "baby" had to undergo psychoanalysis for a severe neurosis, the effect her mother's grief had had on her became painfully apparent. For although the picture never came back with full clearness, Miss K. recognized how she had been made to feel an emotional demand she was unable to meet. Somehow, and of course, without words, she had known her mother wanted something from her that it was beyond her to give, and this knowledge became the seed of the feeling of inadequacy to meet life's demands which was the cause of her neurosis.

Is this hard to believe? Then remember how much more acute a blind man's hearing is than that of somebody who can see—not because his ears are better, but because he has less to distract his attention from the messages that hearing brings him. In the same way, the fact that a baby has no logical ideas makes his emotions register all the more intensely. For that reason it's a good rule never to display intense emotion in a baby's presence—least of all, toward him. Even passionate devotion on your part is as much too strong for his tender feelings as beefsteak and onions would be for his stomach. And to expect comfort

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from him when you're lonely or in trouble is as bad as asking him to help you move his own crib. You'd better not even kiss him, except casually, once he's old enough to kiss you in return, unless he shows that *he* wants to be kissed and doesn't do it just to please you. But don't worry—if he's a normal child, he will be hungry enough for affection so that you won't be left out in the cold long.

There are other things a baby doesn't understand, in our sense, but that he can and will remember and which may make an indelible impression on him. A quarrel between his parents may affect him more than they think possible, not only giving him a sense of insecurity about the home that is his whole world, but starting a conflict in his mind that may have serious consequences. For in halfway normal circumstances a child can't help loving both his parents, and yet when they are at odds, he's almost forced to take sides with one or the other. This, of course, is where parental divorce hurts a child most, even though it's better than to have the father and mother stay together if they can't stop fighting.

Again, witnessing what the psychiatrists call "the primal scene"—sexual intercourse between his parents—has a vast and sometimes devastating effect on the child they are so sure is either asleep or "too young to notice." In *Rebel Without a Cause*, Dr. Robert M. Lindner gives a stenographic transcript of how a man who was being psychoanalysed under hypnosis described his clear recollection of this scene as he had watched it from his crib at the age of eight months; and similar memories from ages of two or three years are frequently brought to light in the course of psychiatric treatment.

Irving S., for instance, suffered from a morbid fear of women and especially of any kind of sexual relations with them. And much of his fear was found to have developed from impressions he had got from watching intercourse between his parents when they thought he was safely asleep.

The last time I heard from Irving was when he sent me an announcement of the birth of his son, and there is one thing I am reasonably sure of. If it possibly can have been managed, that baby has slept from birth in a room where he has not had to face experiences the meaning of which he could not grasp but which he would never forget.

The Worst Harm You can do

There is only one thing you can do to a child's mind that is worse than filling it with fear of real or imaginary danger from the outside world, and that is to make him, in the full and literal sense, *ashamed of himself*. The idea that your own natural impulses and instincts are inherently depraved and that you deserve to be punished for them even though you've tried to "overcome" them is the most disastrous and emotionally paralysing notion that a human mind can cherish. Yet the way in which that notion is implanted in the mind of nearly every child is through the attitude his parents take toward things which he cannot help wanting to do, and does not at first know are wrong or forbidden. I have already spoken of the possible effects of too severe toilet training, which will be just so much worse if the unlucky youngster who has had an accident is forced to meet the most painful of all possible reactions—open disgust from his elders. It is possible to say "*pee-yew*" in a tone that gives a small child the impression that he is what in an adult would be a social outcast. But what is still harder for most parents to deal with as calmly as is absolutely necessary is the fact that nearly all small children indulge more or less in masturbation—or at least in playing with their sexual organs. Of course you, the parent, did the same thing yourself at the same age, though you probably have repressed all memory of it because of the shame and guilt your elders made you feel about it; and the more intense your guilt is, the more you will be inclined to pass it on to the next generation by the way you treat your child's behaviour. But if you love the child and want him to grow into a healthy-minded human being, *break that vicious circle right now!* What he is doing is completely normal and completely harmless, and the only danger in it is in the response it may evoke from you if you aren't careful.

At least this is true if the practice is not carried to extremes, and even in that case, the main risk lies in the feelings that induced it, not the practice itself. For, like thumb-sucking—which also is intrinsically harmless—immoderate masturbation is the way in which the child consoles himself for something else that he is missing—most often affection or attention. And the way to deal with it is not by scolding, or having a "clash of

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wills" about it; as far as you can, you should ignore the habit and do your best to supply in other ways the satisfactions which the child gets from it. For all that you can achieve by scolding will be to fix the child's attention on his "naughtiness" and create a mental conflict which is likely to develop into a neurosis and may harm his sex life forever.

Punishment is Education

But "shaming" is one thing and punishing quite another. Does modern psychology maintain that children should be punished when they are naughty—or not?

Grandma never would have asked this question. If Willie were disobedient or caused other people pain or inconvenience, he "deserved" to suffer for it, and she made sure he got what was coming to him. As long as we believed children—above all, children of respectable parents like ourselves—"ought to know better" than to do things that seem obviously wrong or wicked to us, we could comfortably assume they did such things out of cussedness or obstinacy and that we should beat these qualities out of them for their good as well as our own.

Or at least that is how we thought we felt about it. But the truth is, the original idea of punishment grows out of the instinct of revenge, as modified into the form of "just retaliation." And this means that in a child's case you should make him suffer in proportion to the suffering or inconvenience he has caused you. We still hear occasionally of a drunken or moronic father who beats a sick baby because its crying disturbs him. And if you think your own punishments have no tint of retaliation, just ask yourself whether you would punish a small child as sharply for upsetting a table with nothing on it as for tipping over one you had just set with your best dishes.

But the idea that it's fair to hurt a child because he has done something that hurts you has lately been considerably shaken. For knowing, as we now do, that conscience and morality are never inborn, and that so far as his instincts are concerned there's nothing to restrain a child from doing anything whatever—up to and including killing someone whom he dislikes—which seems likely to get him what he wants, we're coming to see with painful clearness that whatever blame attaches to a child's

wrongdoing really belongs to the defects of his training, not to the child himself. In which case, to punish him for something that is much more our fault than his seems so obviously unfair that some conscientious parents, along with one school of educators and psychologists, have come to believe that children ought not to be punished at all

It is an appealing idea, but unfortunately it just won't work. Living with a child who never has been punished is an ordeal few of us can endure. And, what's more, being brought up in that way is likely to be even harder on the youngster in the long run. For no matter how "progressive" a school he may go to, he'll find some day that his playmates will not let him push them around as his parents and teachers do; and even if they do not punish him, the law will when he is older. So we're forced to recognize that punishment is not based on abstract justice; it's a matter of expediency—an essential if unpleasant part of a child's education. As our children will eventually have to go out into a world in which they'll be made to suffer if they do things their neighbours feel are dangerous or objectionable, we have to start early to teach them to associate suffering with "wrong" behaviour. And we do this by inflicting it upon them in comparatively mild forms that will later help them avoid more severe ones.

The important thing is that this association should become *automatic*. For as everyone who ever drove a car knows, there are crises in which your life depends on what you "do without thinking" because your mind automatically associates certain situations with appropriate acts such as putting on the brakes. The object of punishment is not to pay a child back for some wrong he has done you or others, it's to set up inhibitions that will keep him from acting on dangerous impulses until his reason and conscience have time to begin to function. Whether it is "bad" of Susie to want to hit baby brother with a hammer is comparatively unimportant—the main thing is to make sure she doesn't.

Associate the Punishment with the Deed

Punishment and fear will never make a child *want* to be good, or provide a workable incentive for his growing into a successful and desirable citizen. These things are the product of a force

that goes much deeper, but works relatively slowly—his desire for your love and approval. Punishment is a brake, not a motive power. But that doesn't alter the fact that a child who never has been punished will be just as dangerous when he grows up as a car without brakes.

Putting fear and pain associations in a child's mind is a ticklish business because it's so easy for him to get confused and attach them to the wrong thing. A great deal of chronic constipation—as well as reticence and stinginess—starts with associations that the child mistakenly connects with any "letting go" whatever. And if Johnny gets the idea that he's being punished for wanting to have fun rather than for his manner of getting it, he may come to feel he is a naturally bad child and lack confidence in himself ever after.

The truth is, the actions we call bad are only thoughtless shortcuts to gratifications the child cannot help wanting and essentially has every right to. Your child wants to stay in your good graces, and however foolish it may seem to be, it is natural for him to try to ensure his doing so by lying about things he knows will displease you. He wants and needs playthings, and it's only a poor method (from a long-range standpoint that he can't at first grasp) to get them by grabbing them away from other youngsters. So your problem is to make sure he associates being punished with his *methods*, not with his instinctive wishes or the sort of person he is.

The association of one idea with another, especially in a child's mind, depends on *close sequence in time*. If you wanted to teach Junior arithmetic, you would hardly think of saying "Two and two make"—and then shouting "four!" an hour or so later. Yet to punish a child for an offence he has half forgotten is equally ineffective. There may be times, of course, when delay is necessary, but in that case at least tell the child what punishment is coming to him, and exactly what it is for. Don't leave him in suspense a moment longer than you have to. There's no better way to start the pattern of neurotic anxiety that is at the root of mental illness than to let a child "wait until Daddy gets home and see what he will do."

An association builds up with each repetition and is weakened, if not broken, each time the expected does not happen. The only effect of punishing a child for being noisy when you're nervous

and letting him shout his head off when you're not is to make him feel your disapproval is like lightning, and he doesn't know where it will strike next. Which, of course, does not mean you can't train him to be considerate and make less noise when you have specifically asked him to be quiet

Consider the Child

The question of what forms punishment should take is too big to be discussed here, and while you may find suggestions in books on child training, there are really no fixed rules about it. What is vital, though, is that you judge the harshness of your penalties from the child's standpoint, not yours. Making Bobby mow the lawn is one thing if he has no special plans for the day and a very different one if it keeps him from pitching for the ball team. The same principle applies to spanking, which some children regard as the simplest way of getting things over and forgotten, while to others it is an indignity they live in terror of. The one way of punishing a child that is unpardonable psychologically is to "shame" him, for the damage this does to his self-esteem is out of all proportion to its effect on his behaviour.

Conscientious parents sometimes wonder whether they should punish a child while they're "mad at him" or wait until they've had time to cool off. The fact is, unless you lose your head completely, it doesn't particularly matter. For the child—judging you by himself—will assume you are angry whether you are or not, and will only doubt your sincerity if you assure him that it hurts you more than it does him. All he cares about is that you don't stay mad after it's over and keep nagging him by bringing up old scores which he feels—rightly—should be settled and forgotten.

Finally, don't be afraid that punishing your child will make him cease to love you—at least, if your punishments are fair and reasonable, as he sees them. He feels safer in a world that's still strange to him if he knows there are rules to go by. And essentially—except in his natural rages at your interference, which you must not take over-seriously—he cannot help loving you, whatever happens. For he needs you much too desperately to endure the thought of being permanently alienated from you.

• *How to make a Child want to be Good*

But no matter how effectively you teach a child not to be naughty, that will not in itself make him actively want to be good. We may differ more or less in the details of our idea of what "good" means, but most of us would agree that a good person is one who is honest, kindhearted, and willing to do his share of the world's work rather than attempting to get someone else to do it for him. We must admit that our children do not show much evidence of wanting to be good in this sense, at least while they are little, and that if we let them grow up without discipline and education, they would not be likely to be good by natural instinct.

But punishment supplies no incentive for them to feel different. In fact, punishment and force work only up to a point—the point at which we (or the police) stop looking. And, strangely enough, as we know nowadays, the same is true if the policing is done by the force of moral fear or conscience. A person who's good for any other reason than because he *wants* to be good will ultimately gratify his real wants somehow. No one can be crueller (unconsciously) than the man who does not dare let himself admit he's capable of wanting to hurt anybody, or more subtly selfish than the woman whose conscience requires her to make her whole life a sacrifice for others. And so if we want our children to be really good, we'll have to find a way of making them *enjoy* it, and if we can't do this, we might just as well give up the struggle.

The Power of Self-respect

There's one feeling—and only one that I know of—that can make a child learn to enjoy being honest, kind, and fair. And that feeling is self-respect or, in modern scientific jargon, ego satisfaction. Give your children a chance to develop self-respect and you need not worry about their becoming good men and women—in their own way, if not always in yours. But to be of any use, the self-respect must be *real*—that is, based on the things they do themselves, not on something that just happened to them, or that someone else did for them. A child who is pleased with himself because he lives in a fine house or because his father has a lot of money won't see his superiority as any reason

for being considerate of his playmates. But a child *can* be made to feel—and, I think, legitimately—that lying and cheating are beneath him, and that people like him simply don't do such things. Childish as such pride may be, it at least helps him feel he is *getting something* in return for the advantages he's forgoing. And that's what the difference is between wanting to be good and merely being afraid not to be.

Look at it from a child's standpoint. When you ask him to be really good, you're urging him to go against his natural feeling that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. You are asking him to give up something in which he can see a positive gain (like grabbing the biggest piece of cake before someone else gets it) in favour of something he can neither taste, touch, nor smell—the sense of your love and approval. And I do not know of anything that's more important psychologically than the fact that a child can and will make this choice if it's put up to him in the right way. Your prospect of making your child want to be good hinges on the fact that he wants your love more than he wants anything in the whole world except minimum food, clothing, and shelter. For a short while love may mean no more than being kissed and cuddled, but he soon learns to feel that, to be complete, it must include your admiration and approval—being told that he is sweet, or good, or brave, or clever.

A child who feels he knows how to get his parents' approval will gladly surrender almost any other satisfaction for it. To earn your praise (and be sure you make him realize it must be *earned*) your child will get up when he feels sleepy, eat when he is not particularly hungry, do his lessons—in fact, follow almost any pattern of behaviour you set for him. By letting him know that you are pleased with him, you can gradually make him believe that it's more fun to be clean than to be dirty and more satisfying to be generous than to be selfish. And he won't resent the checks he's putting on his natural instincts, because he'll be getting something for his sacrifices.

How to take the Long View

Obviously, I don't mean that such a transformation will come overnight or that there won't be lapses, for you're asking a still-immature mind to do what your own mind cannot always

achieve—to look ahead and think of the long-range consequences. There'll be crises when temptation will be so strong as to make him forget, and then punishment may be needed to help him remember next time. But, essentially, unless your demands are so unreasonable that he comes to feel there's no use trying, he'll do almost anything that he feels you admire and approve.

In itself, to be sure, this is not self-respect, but it's the first step toward it. The child starts by feeling he can be pleased with himself because his mother says he is a good boy. Then he goes to school and begins backing up his self-approval with the fact that he's accepted or admired by the other children—indeed you must not feel hurt if for a time their good opinion seems to mean more to him than yours, for this is the generation he will someday have to live with. And finally he begins to evolve his own standards, based on yours, those of the friends he most admires, and his own thinking. And on these his adult self-respect will depend.

First of these may well be the idea of sportsmanship, or fair play. A child with the right encouragement may come to see quite young that it's no fun to win by cheating, because then your victory is phony and you've nothing real to be proud of. And while sportsmanship without hard sense can get you into serious difficulties, it still builds a pretty worth-while sort of person.

The same is true of the self-respect that's based on the idea of being "well bred"—and I say this at the risk of being called undemocratic. If a "gentleman" means only a man of good family (as the word originally did mean), it is no more reason for approving oneself than being born white—or an Anglo-Saxon. But if a young man can learn to channel his natural wish to be "superior" into a determination to be more considerate, more tactful, more appreciative of fine things than the other fellow, his "snobbishness," which he almost certainly will outgrow, will at least make him a better citizen than if he cared only to be the fellow who can grab the most the fastest.

Do Adults need Ego Satisfaction?

Finally, whatever the results of the discovery of atomic power, it is the biggest single addition ever made to human knowledge.

And it's not an accident that the discovery was made by men and women, none of whom has any great amount of money or is "famous" in the way a movie star is. People like these have reached the point where they find their ego satisfaction, not in wealth or public applause, but in *knowing they have done a good job*. And if anyone suggested they had "made great sacrifices" for the only thing they really wanted in life, they would scarcely know what he was talking about.

There are many kinds of people who "want to be good" for the same sort of reason. There's the doctor to whom winning a hard fight with disease means more than the fee you pay him; the teacher who goes home happy because he has helped his pupils see things in a new light, the writer or editor to whom letting the public know the facts is all that really matters. And I don't want to leave out the farmer whose stock wins blue ribbons or the business-man who knows his product has enriched the lives of his neighbours. Or perhaps the best example of all, the mother whose delight is not in her children's "devotion" to her, but in the strong, happy, worth-while men and women they have become. For after we've satisfied our hungers and earned the right to respect ourselves, life has one supreme joy to offer—the joy of creation, which beyond all others can rightly be called divine. Set your children on the road toward that joy, and you need not fear but that of their own choice they will become good men and women.

CHAPTER XV

YOUR CHILD GOES TO SCHOOL

POSSIBLY YOU COULD NOT START your child off in a home that was in every way the kind you would have liked to give him. There may have been less air and sunshine, less attractive places to play, and even less of the highest grade of food that is considered ideal. A city apartment certainly is not the pleasantest place a child can grow up in, and in other ways an isolated farm or ranch has disadvantages too. But at least the atmosphere of your child's life has so far been of your creation and the influences brought to bear on him were mainly yours and those of people you could supervise and "keep an eye on."

But now comes the time when custom and the law say he must leave you for a good part of his waking hours. He must go to school, and be thrown into contact, not only with teachers you do not know much about (though you will find it worth your while to get acquainted with them), but with other children whose parents' ideas of how a child should be brought up are very different from yours. Your youngster must take the next and longest step yet in the process of developing the power to go ahead under his own steam toward which all your dealings with him should be oriented.

For Mother, at least, a child's first day in school is apt to be a rather sad occasion, even though by now she may be wise enough not to indulge in unrestrained self-pity at the idea of "losing her baby." She knows that while in a sense she can keep him always if she wants to, the result of doing so will be disastrous for him, and eventually for her. Let us hope the frighteningly large proportion of young men who proved too immature emotionally to be able to defend their country in World War II has demonstrated once and for all the disastrous consequences of keeping our children tied too closely to us too long. And the wiser your child's training has been until now, the less apt he will be to cower weeping in a corner when you go away and leave him with a group of strangers.

An Untried Relationship

To learn to get on with these strangers will at first be far from easy—because, except for the teacher, it involves the child's adjusting himself to a new type of relationship for which none that he has yet had has prepared him. Until now his contacts have been largely with people older, wiser, and much stronger than himself, to whose wishes he has had to learn to conform, but whom he could also look to for protection both from strange adults and from bullying older children. To be "good" has mainly meant to be obedient and do what was expected of him. But now he must find out how to get along with children of his own age, with whom he is on an equal footing—children who will not make allowances for his mistakes "because he is such a little fellow," or refrain from making fun of his peculiarities, if he has any. Indeed, on slight provocation they will gang up on him with a cruelty that makes the average adult shudder, since they are too young either to know what mercy means or to restrain their natural sadism except when they know grown-ups are around.

Because most of all your child's experience has been with comparatively mature people, it will not be likely to occur to him that his playmates are as frightened and emotionally insecure as he is. And only whatever confidence in himself and the world has been built up in his mind by your training will keep him from being thrown into a complete panic. But after a while—quite soon, if he is healthy-minded—he will find a new sense of security in place of that which he has had in knowing you were close by to take care of him. He will become "one of the crowd" and be largely content to let its standards take the place of yours as the "reality" to which he must now adjust his natural impulses and desires.

The importance of a child's gaining this sense of "belonging" can hardly be overestimated. For if he does not achieve it in his schooldays, ten chances to one he will be an outsider—at least in his own eyes—for the rest of his life. Even though he may win fame and fortune he will remain lonely and frustrated, convinced that "the world is against him." Indeed, it is so that he may begin the task of social integration while he is still pliable that a child should go to school comparatively young

rather than be educated at home, no matter how much more skilled his parents are as teachers than those whom he will find in the average classroom.

Ned G. was the only son of elderly cultured parents who could not see what the boy would learn in grade school that they could not teach him, and hated the idea of his being thrown with children who would surely teach him things they did not want him to learn. From the standpoint of pure intellectual progress, their idea worked beautifully. At the age of eight, when Ned at last began his schooling, he was put at once into the sixth grade and after a month's acclimatizing ranked head of the class and stayed there without effort—as, indeed he did up to his college graduation.

But adapting himself to his classmates and getting himself accepted by them was another matter. By the time I knew Ned he was middle-aged and after many struggles had become a fairly normal person, but even at fifty he would shudder at the memory of the "hell on earth" his schooldays had been. He never felt really comfortable in large groups of people, especially men and women less cultured than he. For not only had his classmates promptly branded him the teacher's pet, but the difference in his dress, his manners, and his language had set up an impassable barrier between them and him.

If Your Child is "Different"

Being unlike other children, even in ways that seem trivial to a grown-up, is one of the biggest obstacles to a child's feeling himself one of the crowd. For the impulse of the crowd (sometimes called the herd instinct) is invariably to protect its faith in its own standards by rejecting—or even destroying—anyone who does not conform to them.

The conventions that a group of children set up may seem silly to us—as silly, perhaps, as lipstick would have seemed to our grandmothers—but that doesn't make things any easier for the child who violates them. Your knowing that Johnny's clothes are better or more sensible than other small boys', or that he has better manners and speaks better English, won't save him from being sneered at as a sissy, or from having to fight two or three times oftener than the other kids do. And what's even

more important, his superiority in your eyes won't keep him from feeling that there must be something queer about him—and about you, as well. A child doesn't have to be less clever or good-looking than his playmates to develop an inferiority complex. All he needs is to be different, and feel there is nothing he can do about it.

Some of the things he will do, if you let him, may disturb you, and I admit that there are lengths to which you can't let his desire for conformity take him. It isn't essential that he should swear, or become a thoroughgoing rowdy. But it's better that his manners should be, for a time, a little coarser than you like than that he should always feel strange and ill at ease with other people. As for his tastes and moral standards, don't forget that you had the first chance at him, so that in the long run the force of your teaching and example will be pretty certain to outweigh the vulgar influences you're so worried about. You probably shocked your parents sometimes when you were a youngster, and yet in the end have come back to most of their ways of living.

But, of course, there may be ways in which your child is different about which you can do nothing.

"Isn't it marvellous!" the visitor gushed. "I do believe little Betty is going to have your gorgeous red hair."

Betty's mother eyed her daughter's pink fuzz dubiously. "I'm afraid I can't quite see it that way," she demurred. "Of course, now that I am grown up I know some people think my hair is pretty, but that has never made up to me for what I went through at school because of being a redhead. If I had been stupid or deformed I hardly could have felt more of a freak. Of course, as a mother, I like to think my baby is different from anybody else's, but I certainly don't want *her* to feel that way—at least before she is grown up."

Even worse off than the redhead is the child who is handicapped or deformed in some way, and it doesn't matter how minor the defect is. Small children, especially, are without pity for others' misfortunes, and will jeer as loudly at a lame leg as at an unusual kind of haircut. If your child is "different" in any way, you cannot be too careful to hide from him any feelings of regret or mortification which the fact may cause you, but neither should you try to pretend his handicap is non-existent, nor make his adjustment to

his playmates harder by intensifying his natural feeling that it is mean and cruel of them to speak of it, let alone to make fun of him for it. For in that direction lies self-pity—the worst mental enemy the handicapped person can be called upon to face as long as he lives. Teach your child first that his playmates will soon tire of ridiculing him once they find it doesn't "get under his skin," and then help him to develop along lines in which his disabilities won't matter.

If he can't play baseball, encourage him to learn other things in which his schoolmates will be interested—how to make things with his hands, perhaps, or how to tell stories. The boy who can recognize more types of aeroplanes than his pals, or knows more about baseball scores or battle tactics, can earn a respect that's untinted with pity, and become one of the gang.

By now nearly everybody knows the principle of compensation—which is that a healthy-minded human being naturally tries to balance his defects, if any, by a special effort to develop the capacities he has. Blind people hear better than the rest of us, not because they have keener ears, but because they have trained themselves to listen more intently. And the fact that cripples such as Lord Byron or physical weaklings such as Charles Darwin have become distinguished poets or scholars grows out of the same sound impulse.

Yet even compensation has dangers, and a parent should be on the watch for them. For example, many children build up a false notion of their own superiority because the only way they can stand feeling different is to make themselves believe they're somehow better. That's how most snobs and conceited people are created. But feeling superior not only isolates us from our neighbours, it keeps us continually in a state of mental tension because we are never so sure of our superiority as we feel we *must* be.

If your child is different, you should be particularly careful that he doesn't get discouraged at the difficulty of becoming one of the crowd, and withdraw into a private life of his own. Without trying to keep him from reading altogether, coax him out of spending all his spare time at it—or, what's still worse, in day-dreaming. And don't think it a good sign if he prefers the society of grown-ups to that of children his own age. I occasionally hear a mother boast that her boy or girl would rather be with

her than with other youngsters, as if this proved how much the child loves her. What it really proves is that the child has given up the job of winning his place in the group to which he should belong. He's lost hope of earning recognition and approval on his merits, and has fallen back on a love he can take for granted. And this psychological defeatism will be like a millstone around his neck as long as he lives

Should You and Your Children be "Pals"?

One particularly subtle way in which some conscientious parents fool themselves into holding on more tightly to their children than is healthy or desirable is the modern notion that children and parents ought to be "pals."

"I suppose I must have slipped up somewhere," a friend of mine admitted sadly. "Ever since my boy was born I had been looking forward to the time when we'd be real pals, the way I wished my own dad and I could have been. I couldn't do much about it while he was a little shaver, but last summer he turned twelve and I thought we could start doing all sorts of things together. I got him the sailing dinghy he'd been wanting so long, and thought that between that and the swimming, and perhaps a bit of hiking, I'd have a real chance to get as close to him as I had always felt I should be.

"But it didn't work out. He was polite enough—even friendly in a stiff sort of way—but I couldn't help seeing that he was ill at ease and a bit on the defensive all the time we were together. And although I'll give him credit for doing his best to hide it, his relief when I was busy and he got a chance to go off with the other kids his own age was too obvious for me to miss it. There's some sort of barrier between us, and I can't imagine what it is or how it got there."

The complaint is one that I have heard from many fathers. Some of them, like my friend, have really wanted to be "pals" to their boys, and a lot more have believed they ought to be because they'd been told that that was one of the duties of a father. Nearly always they've been disappointed, much as Jim was, and, like him, have wondered where they got off on the wrong foot.

Many mothers have a similar experience. Sooner or later

they find that no matter how hard they try, they feel themselves eventually shut out; and the harder they try to get back on the old footing, the stronger the unseen barrier becomes.

The barrier is there, in most cases, but the parents did not build it. It was built by Nature—or, more accurately, human nature. It grows out of the child's instinctive feelings and needs. For while parents can be—or try to be—pals, a pal cannot be a parent in the strict sense; and it's parents in the strict sense that a child wants above all things. Pals, comparatively, are a dime a dozen. Of course, I'm assuming the word "pal" is used to mean a person with whom you can enjoy intimacy on an equal footing, whereas parents are the people you look up to and depend on because you trust their superior strength and wisdom. A child wants and needs both, but his need for parents comes first, and he cannot give them up without an uncomfortable sense of being cheated.

My friend's desire to be a real pal to his son would scarcely have occurred to his grandfather. Reading of how children in Victorian times felt about their parents, and especially their fathers, we see how unnatural the atmosphere of those homes was. A child ought to feel at ease with his father and mother much more than the youngsters of those days did, and the "respect" they were taught to have for their "elders and betters"—because it was so largely artificial—was a thoroughly unhealthy feeling to have to carry through childhood.

The Swing of the Pendulum

But to-day the pendulum has swung considerably too far in the opposite direction. For whether or not a child *ought* to respect his parents, he very much needs to, psychologically, and will suffer if he does not. A child who does not respect his parents is in even a worse situation than the average adult who has "lost faith" in religion: he feels he is in a world to which he not only has no key, but sees no hope of finding any. Yet even between adults respect can seldom survive too great intimacy. You know the old saying, "No man is a hero to his valet," and not many men are heroes to their wives, however honestly their wives may love them. With a child, who cannot make allowances

as an adult does, the other old saying that "familiarity breeds contempt" is true with but few exceptions.

There is no great harm, for instance, in a grown-up's getting a bit "high" occasionally and reverting to some of the silliness of his own childhood. The delight so many people feel in acting like the village cut-up, screaming at off-colour jokes, and wearing absurd costumes only shows how much of a strain it is to act all the time like the adults we never have at heart become—in fact, as a safety valve, behaving this way may even do us good. But to do it in our children's presence is another story. I've heard adolescent girls talk of "the night Mother got so drunk" with nearly as much horror as though she had committed murder; and many a "natural comedian" has caused his children untold misery by behaviour that seemed simply funny to people his own age. For our children want to believe that we're practically perfect, even though that very belief makes them more or less uncomfortable and self-conscious when they're with us. It was because my friend's boy admired him so profoundly that he was ill at ease in his presence.

The truth is, a parent has a role to play which requires more poise, dignity, and wisdom than most of us possibly could maintain twenty-four hours a day. And yet there is no hypocrisy in playing this role so long as one does not actually pretend to be something that he is not. In fact, it is really when you're trying to put yourself on an equal footing with your children that you are "pretending"—and right well they know it. For you cannot feel about things quite as they do, and no matter how much leeway you may give them in a tussle or an argument, they are perfectly aware that in the end you have the last word.

Learning Competition

Suppose you are playing a game. Up to adolescence, anyhow, your child knows that when you play golf or tennis with him he will either have no chance of winning, or will win simply because you let him. Either way he loses the part of the game that's most important in his education for life—competition on a fair and equal footing. From the time he leaves the nursery, the most vital lesson a child must learn is how to meet the rivalry of his contemporaries. That is what he will be up against

the moment he leaves school or college, and his success will depend on the amount of practice he's had. But when he competes with you, one of two bad things happen: either he judges himself by your standards—in which case he will inevitably be discouraged by the fact that he cannot possibly meet them—or else he will get into the habit of expecting everyone to make allowances for the fact that he's only a youngster. He needs to learn to judge how good he is by the standards that apply to his age, and he cannot learn this except by competing with other members of his age group.

But you may say. "Think how much a child learns by being with older people!" Within limits, this is quite true, but remember that nothing a child learns is as valuable as the things he *finds out*. Lessons are and should be part of his life, but experience is always more important, and he doesn't get experience by learning from his parents. A boy walking through the woods with Father may learn much about natural history, but he will not get to know *the woods* as he would if he was with boys of his own age.

When it is not because of an exaggerated sense of duty, our desire to be pals with our children may spring from our own immaturity and failure to adjust ourselves to other people on an equal footing. I've heard men say: "What a relief it is after being picked on all day at the office to come home and realize that your kids think you're the greatest guy on earth!" That's the way all children naturally tend and want to feel about their parents, and while they are little it's a very necessary feeling. But this does not give us any right to capitalize the feeling for our pleasure, and as an "escape" from our own failures and inadequacies. The mother who consoles herself for her husband's neglect by devoting herself to her children and the father who takes refuge from his business insignificance in the fact that he can always be a "big shot" in his son's eyes are taking unfair advantage of their natural prestige as parents.

The real—and the supreme—"sacrifice" of parenthood is not the money, time, and labour we expend upon our children, it's our gradual withdrawal to the background of their lives and interests. Our true function, biologically and psychologically, is to train them to get on without us; and to this aim all else should be secondary.

Your Part in Your Child's Education

While the most vital task of your child's schooldays is to begin to detach himself from you and win his place among his contemporaries, it is also obviously necessary that he do what he is supposed to "go to school for," get himself an education. For the degree of success and comfort, if not happiness, he will achieve when he grows up will depend on how far he is given the intellectual discipline as well as the skill and "know-how" which his formal education ought to provide.

But don't get the common notion that all this is fundamentally up to his teachers, it depends far more on you than on them. Indeed, there is reason to believe that even a high "I.Q." which was once thought to be fixed at birth by "heredity" depends more on how a child's parents treat him and the kind of home he grows up in than on any natural endowments. In at least one notable experiment conducted under the supervision of the Teachers' College of the University of Iowa, a number of babies who had been born out of wedlock, and at least one of whose parents was known to be mentally subnormal, were put into good homes before they were six months old; at five years their average I Q was equal to that of the children of college professors. So if your child is considered "dull" or "slow," the overwhelming probability is that he was not born that way but has had his natural development blocked by mistakes you didn't know you were making.

Curiosity and Learning

What makes a child want to learn—even his lessons, though this is the point at which he is most likely to resist the idea? It is the inborn urge we call curiosity—the instinct that impels him to ask questions with a pertinacity which if you do not discourage it seems sometimes as though it would "drive you crazy." And the way in which you meet that curiosity largely determines whether a child will want to learn, and go on learning for the rest of his life, or will settle back, lose interest in everything except the satisfactions of the moment, and acquire only as much knowledge as can be crammed into him by force.

Curiosity, however, is at first as much an outgrowth of the sex urge or primitive Pleasure Principle as is any other natural

instinct. It expresses the desire to understand the world in which the child lives so as to get pleasure from it. And this, in turn, implies wanting to know about other people's pleasures, above all those which are instinctively most fascinating unless or until the child has learned to be afraid to display any interest in them. The craving for sexual knowledge—especially knowledge of such matters as the difference between males and females, "where the baby came from," and what happens when Father and Mother go to bed together—is as natural and normal in a child as the desire for food. And upon the way this craving is received largely depends the growth of curiosity in general. The impression that it is "naughty" (i.e. punishable) to ask questions, gained originally from the response of his elders to such queries as "What makes Mother's stomach so big?", can be carried over into other fields of information, up to and including the idea that you must not ask teacher just what fractions are, or why x represents a cryptic something called the "unknown quantity." And there is sound reason for believing that the fact that parents are more likely to be horrified when a little girl asks questions about things in which "nice" girls are not supposed to be interested is the reason why, until comparatively lately, so few women have been really interested in scholarship or intellectual achievement.

Children always Find Out

One thing which you can be reasonably sure of is that if you don't satisfy your child's curiosity, his playmates will—and relatively early in his schooldays. There are even people like the late Dr. Logan Clendenen who maintain that the best place for a child to gain sexual knowledge is "the gutter"—meaning a dark corner of the playground or behind the woodshed. This may be true in the case of parents who cannot give a child sexual information without tainting it with their own fear and guilt at anything connected with the subject. My mother told me "the facts of life"—or, rather, confirmed what other small boys had told me—when I was six years old, but with such a weight of puritanic fear and superstition that I should have been much better off if I had kept my newly acquired information to myself. (She told me, for instance, that girls had no sexual feelings "until after they were married," and by warning me

of the "temptations" which my sexual feelings would involve effectively implanted in my mind a sense of shame at being a morally inferior male from which it took psychoanalysis to free me.)

If you cannot teach your children the truth about sex without getting all upset about it, better get somebody else—perhaps a child psychologist—to do so, since what they will pick up either "in the gutter" or from most well-meaning but inhibited and often ignorant schoolteachers will be apt to do them more harm than good. But so, it must be admitted, will your failure to discuss the subject with him. Few things fill a child's mind with more morbid sex than the feeling that his parents think sex is unmentionable. And this, coupled with the knowledge—which he is certain to acquire some time—that they practise sexual relations themselves will add doubt of their honesty to the shame he feels at his own interests and urges.

On the other hand—and this is most important—you don't have to give your child a systematic "education" on sex matters, or go into a long-winded lecture on the bees and flowers. All you need to do is *answer his questions* as simply and frankly as you know how, in words which he will understand and can make part of his vocabulary. For between the age when a child goes to school and the onset of adolescence comes what is known as the "latency period," when sex is no longer of intense importance to him unless it has been overemphasized, either by being forbidden, or by being too much talked of. The child who "knows what it is all about" will think of it comparatively little, while to the child who does not know, it will be a tantalizing puzzle, hard to "keep his mind off."

Take, for instance, the child's interest in sex differences, especially in the structure of the sexual organs. To-day in the better grade of nursery schools little boys and girls use the same toilets and take showers together, so that they learn to accept their respective anatomical peculiarities without question. The same sort of practice, with even the parents included, probably is best at home also. One eminent child psychiatrist (a woman) goes so far as to advise mothers: "If your small boy asks you what a woman looks like—*show him!*" This is valid advice except for a mother who would be incapable of following it without such embarrassment as would undo its purpose. And remember that

a normal child is almost certain to attempt to satisfy his curiosity in one way or another, and if he does it in ways that shock his elders, their reaction may have serious and lasting effects.

Malcolm H, an only child, had been consumed with curiosity about the female body and finally made a desperate attempt to solve the mystery by peeping through the keyhole when an aunt was taking a bath. His mother, unfortunately, caught him at it and the scolding she administered warped his emotional development in at least two ways. For one thing, it led him to attach a sense of guilt to any kind of "looking" which made him unable to remember people's faces, sometimes even after spending hours with them—he might pass his dinner partner of the previous evening without recognition when he met her on the street the next day. But besides that, the shock of his mother's intense disapproval developed in him a tendency to "voyeurism"—the form of perversion that is mainly interested in peeping and has little interest in actual contact. And this is not really inconsistent, since when any natural instinct is repressed, as Malcolm's curiosity was, it becomes a focal point for emotional conflict and is likely to be alternately smothered, and expressed in bizarre or "abnormal" forms. The same sort of thing frequently happens in the case of children who are caught in sexual experiments or investigations—often in the guise of "playing doctor"—and are treated as though they were monsters of iniquity for doing what it's practically certain that their parents did at the same age and have conveniently forgotten. My experience has been that nearly everyone, under analysis, will reveal some memory of this type which has been a lingering focus of emotional infection all of his or her life.

"Voyeurism" is far from the only deviation from the sexual norm (or at least, average) which may begin with the treatment a child receives during the latency period. This stage of development is also called "the period of normal homosexuality" because at this time a boy's main interest usually is in other boys and a girl's in playmates of her own sex. And while such preoccupation does not always lead to pseudo-sexual intimacies, these occur much oftener than most parents suppose. Once more the rule is, "Least said, soonest mended." A boy or girl who does not begin to show a preference for the opposite sex by the time he or she reaches high school—if not well before that—is a

problem which requires investigation, but to overstress the danger or the "silliness" of earlier crushes on members of a child's own sex is more apt to strengthen than to weaken any homosexual tendencies that he or she may have.

Learning can be Pleasure

A child whose right to seek information about anything in which he is interested has never been questioned will, as I have said, learn what he wants to know about sex and "forget about it," going on to seek the meaning and cause of just about everything with which he comes in contact. If he has competent teachers, learning will never be a burden to him and—no matter what he may pretend in deference to the conventions of his playmates—he will find going to school a pleasure. But you can do much to make this true for your child by the attitude you take toward his lessons, and even the individual subjects which he has to study. As was noted in a previous chapter, a child's "inability to learn" one special subject nearly always can be traced to an emotional bias which he acquired, either through a teacher whom he disliked or, more often, from the feelings which he heard his parents express. If you let your child know you consider it a waste of time to study Latin grammar—or grammar of any kind—do not be surprised if he dislikes it and finds it "boring." For even at this age a child has no stronger impetus to study than his desire for your interest and approval. If he knows you care for history and are glad to talk to him about it, that will do far more to make him do his homework than scolding or even promises of reward. Your child's later studies, in fact, offer a good opportunity to brush up on your own education, and you will help yourself as well as him by keeping a jump ahead on the subjects he is studying—or at least some of them. But this does not mean that you should do his lessons for him; that will only make him feel that his own efforts are needless and useless—one of the most dangerous impressions a child can gain.

Don't abuse a Child's Confidence

But while it will be a good idea to have your child feel you know more than he does, even about his school work, you should not abuse his confidence by making him think you are infallible

or know things which you do not know. For sooner or later he is going to discover that you *can* be wrong. And because it weakens the sense of security his belief in your omniscience gave him, this discovery at best will hurt him even more than it does you

At the same time, once the shock is over, your child will retain his trust in you as long as he believes you are honest—with yourself as well as with him—and the surest way to make him feel this is never to tell him anything as a fact unless you are reasonably certain of it. Your saying, “I don’t know,” will not disillusion him about you, it will only help him grasp the all-important truth of how much there is that nobody knows, and inspire him to find out for himself. And remember, if our children don’t eventually reach the stage of knowing more than we do, human progress will stop as far as we are concerned.

If possible, even more important than your child’s belief in your honesty is his faith in your fundamental fairness. When a child says, “But that isn’t fair,” your cue is not to scold him for impertinence or call him silly; it’s to recognize a danger signal. For while no child is born naturally reasonable, all children develop out of their experience with their parents an ideal of what is fair and what is unfair upon which their characters will largely depend when they grow up.

Let’s say that when your child was a tiny baby he saw the bright, shiny scissors and howled with rage when you would not give them to him. (Yes, I said “rage,” for that is the automatic response of all living creatures to frustration of their desires.) Because baby was too little to be punished, you distracted his attention from the scissors. You flourished his Teddy bear, took him up in your arms and fondled him, or hurried up the bottle, and the baby’s anger was forgotten—till the next time.

What you really did was substitute one satisfaction for another. You *made a deal* with the baby, although neither of you may have realized it. And in normal cases, the most vital part of a child’s training consists of just such exchanges or trades. Your child wants things that he can’t have, and you give him something just as good or better in place of them. And so by degrees he learns to be contented with the things he can have and forgets about the dangerous or wrong things.

As the child grows older, the factor of trading is less obvious, but it is still there. He will be "good" (which to every child means acting as you want him to instead of as he wants to) in return for your love and approval. And because he wants and needs these more than he does anything except the bare necessities of life, he feels that he has made a fair bargain. For your love and its expression are at once a source of delight to him and a guarantee that you won't go away and leave him helpless and defenceless. Your approval, in turn, is his main protection against the uncertainties he faces as a stranger in a new world. He tells himself, for example, that the tower he builds with his blocks is something to be proud of, but he cannot be sure until you confirm his judgment.

But remember, your approval must not be given for nothing; you must drive a bargain that is fair to *both sides*. And this is because a child who grows up expecting what he never has earned is bound to be disillusioned. Mary W. had the kind of mother to whom everything she did was practically perfect. But once she met other people, she discovered that no one else felt the way her mother did about her looks—or talents. As a result, Mary lost confidence not only in her mother (though it took her some time to admit this), but in herself. The more her mother insisted that the reason Mary was a wallflower was that no one had sense enough to appreciate her, the more baffled Mary felt, and the harder it was for her to come out of her shell. She realized that she needed criticism, but knew neither how to take it from her friends nor how to criticize herself.

At the other extreme, Tom K. became a woman-hater, though at first you never would have recognized it from his actions. He was not quite a "wolf," but he'd go to almost any lengths to make a girl care for him, and then have no further interest in her. He had the sort of mother who refused to praise him for anything he did because she thought it would make him conceited; and until he understood what he was doing (he'd been totally unconscious of what made him a heartbreaker), he had spent his life in trying to get even.

Of course, there's another way of making a child be good besides trading your love and approval for his self-denials. You can frighten him into "behaving" by letting him know he'll be severely punished if he doesn't. But to give up what he

wants and receive nothing in return is just as bad a swindle to a child as it would be to you to be refused your envelope on pay-day. If this is the fundamental reason your child is good, there's one thing you can be quite sure of. In his heart of hearts he hates you, and he'll ultimately get his revenge, one way or another. He may not be able, or may not dare, to get at *you*, in which case he'll take out his aggression on some weaker person, or on himself. But his mind will become what one of my clients called "a cesspool of hate," and he'll grow into a person whose main delight is to see someone suffer. I believe the old German tradition of parental discipline, especially as heightened by the Nazi régime, is what mainly explains Buchenwald and Dachau.

As I've said before, I don't mean that a child never should be punished. If he has the sort of sense of justice that he should have, he'll not only accept punishment as deserved when he knows he's done wrong, but feel restless and uneasy until he has received it. But always his punishment must mean a way of being restored to your favour. It must never be repeated in the form of nagging, once an offence has been fairly paid for; nothing outrages a child's sense of justice more than that does.

The time won't be long in coming when a child may reasonably expect more than your approval as payment for doing what you want him to do. He will realize, though at first rather vaguely, that people who work get their reward in money, and will wonder why he cannot be paid also. I firmly believe it is important that he should be—within reason. The idea that a child "owes" his parents everything he can do for them as a return for what they have done for him is not only practically incomprehensible to children, it is "against Nature." Even animals do not expect a "return" from their offspring; if they thought about it (as, of course, they do not), they might figure that what they do for their young is their way of repaying their own parents—that whatever debt there is, is to the species, not to individual members of it. A child who is old enough may rightly be taught to realize that the home is a co-operative enterprise of which he shares the benefits, and that for this reason it is in his interest—not merely a "duty"—to help keep it going. But beyond his fair share of whatever chores need doing, a child ought to learn as young as possible that the way

to get things, and, above all, pleasures, is by working for them; and a child who grasps this notion soon enough and firmly enough will never be "lazy." Certainly a child needs and ought to have pocket money, at best in the form of an "allowance" of which he can learn to plan his spending. But he also ought to have a chance to earn by his own efforts the small luxuries he wants, but realizes he can do without if necessary. Indeed, if it is practicable, it is a good plan, both in school and even more in college, to give a child such things as board, clothing, and tuition, but leave it to him (or even her) to earn the price of parties, evening clothes, and other "extras."

How Much Freedom?

By degrees, as your child grows from kindergarten into high school, the question of how much freedom he should have becomes more and more important; for nothing can be more dangerous than to give him freedom he has not learned to use wisely. The reason why this is so is that whatever he does or leaves undone will have its inevitable consequences, and freedom that does not recognize this simply won't work in the real world.

It's giving a child false freedom to let him grow up with the idea that he can be as rude and inconsiderate as he pleases, because while you make allowances for him, other people will not. But teaching him cause and effect is much better than to give him the idea that you are interfering with his wishes merely to be mean or disagreeable. At one of the more progressive boarding schools a group of the youngest boys went on a rampage and tore most of the screens out of their dormitory windows. The boys weren't punished, but the screens weren't mended, either, and it was not long till the mosquitoes found their way in and taught the young outlaws a lesson they'll always remember.

Here's the difference between training for freedom and the "spoiling" with which it is often confused. For, of course, you cannot really let a child do anything he pleases unless, one way or another, you protect him from the consequences—clean up after him, pay for the windows he breaks, fight his battles with the other children or adults whom he antagonizes, and, in general, cushion him against the world in which he should be

learning to live. When he does things that will get him into trouble when he's older, you will have to dramatize the fact by punishing him. A child's taking things that are not his is no sign he is naturally wicked, for all children "swipe" unless they are taught not to. But to let him grow up with the idea that appropriating other children's playthings is the kind of thing he will be "free" to go on doing is to handicap him very badly indeed.

The matter of consequences provides the test of how much freedom a child should have at each stage of his development. It's false freedom, again, to allow a youngster to make choices or decisions and then wriggle out of sticking to them. If Sue sets her heart on a too absurd hat, either do not let her buy it (which means you think she's not ready for that sort of freedom) or make sure she wears it, even if she hates it after she has realized how it looks on her. And if you give Sue and her brother spending money, as you certainly should, have it cover only those things you are willing to have them do without if they waste it. Don't let their allowance cover lunches if you are afraid to have them go hungry.

Above all, remember that a child will not be fit for freedom if he grows up feeling that somebody will always take care of him and give him what he wants without any return on his part. The older a child gets, the more clearly he should see that there is no real freedom to satisfy one's desires except a free chance to *earn* the right to do so. And this should apply to girls as much as to their brothers.

Train a child for freedom along these lines, and you'll find he will mature much faster than he would if you either gave him an overdose of discipline, or spoiled him. And if the time comes when you're obliged to put him on his own a little sooner than you meant to, he'll be able to take care of himself nearly as well as if you were there—and, in the long run, better.

CHAPTER XVI

YOU REAP YOUR REWARD

FOR YEARS YOU HAVE TENDED your "child garden"; now the fruit begins to ripen and show how much—or how little—success has crowned your labours. Watching and, as far as you can, helping your children through their adolescence may be the most thrilling and rewarding part of your experience as a parent; and it also may be the most disappointing and nerve-racking. Whichever it is for you (and the chances are it will be something of both) it will be the same for your children, if not more so. For while the romantic novelists picture youth as life's happiest time, what they really have in mind is their own youth, not as it was, but as they wish to believe it was, with the blunders and disappointments comfortably forgotten. Most of us as we look back remember the big game in which we made a touchdown, or the dance where the stag line went wild about us, but blot out the painful memories of a thousand mistakes and ten thousand anxious moments. In an ideal world, youth might be what we dream it was in retrospect. But in the world as it is, youth is the time of all our lives when we face the most urgent tasks and problems with the least ability to deal wisely with them.

I emphasize this because your children's adolescence is the time when they most need the sympathetic understanding which (except for bread and butter and a roof over their heads) is by now about all you can give them. Your main work is finished and the characters you have done so much to develop—or warp—are essentially what they will always be from now on. If your children's characters are not what you wish they were, all that has been learned in recent years points up the fact that it is *you* who have failed, not the once completely plastic personality you had to work with. For—as cannot possibly be said too often—there are no "bad" children; every child is born with

limitless possibilities for growth and for distortion, and which one takes place is almost entirely his parents' doing.

If You think You have Failed

I do not mean that if you have failed (and remember, some of the most useful and successful men and women throughout history have been "disappointments" to their parents) you need wrap yourself in sackcloth and lie down among the ashes. Nobody knows all the answers and you may fail as a parent with as good intentions as those of the doctor who loses a patient from a disease he had never had an opportunity to recognize until then. But whatever failure there has been is *yours*, not the children's, and to blame or even hate them for it, as too many parents have done, is the very acme of injustice and false self-vindication. The least you can do is to help the boys and girls whom you "do not know what to do with" to find someone else who can undo your blunders; and while this can't be done completely, well qualified "child-guidance experts" may accomplish more than would have been believed possible even a generation ago.

The two problems most apt to confront the parents of an adolescent are *delinquency* and *mental illness*; and of these, the former is the easier to deal with. For the youngster who drinks or steals automobiles can at least be shown that there are better ways to get rid of his inhibitions, or to gain the sense of power and importance he is seeking, while the child who has lost confidence in his capacity to get anything at all out of the world which he now faces has more serious inner conflicts which he must be helped to face and master.

Indeed, at this stage it often is the very characteristics which the unenlightened parents sees as "virtues" that are really danger signals. The teen-ager who is always "sensible," reserved, and quiet, who likes books better than parties and who thinks most of the things his classmates do—especially their budding romances—are silly, is the one most likely to be heading for neurosis or psychosis. Even that complete absorption in a single study or ambition which occasionally marks a nascent genius is more likely to involve a frantic effort to escape some unsolved problem such as that of getting on with other members of one's

age group. And while, all tradition to the contrary, no boy or girl—and no adult—ever yet “broke down from overstudy,” the conflicts which drove the youngster to choose study as his way out of more puzzling problems are just those which finally may force him to the ultimate retreat of schizophrenia, or what (because it so often first appears in adolescence) formerly was called “precocious madness”—*dementia præcox*. If your child is very “bad” indeed, you may need to see a child-guidance expert, but if he (or she) is too “good,” a psychiatrist may well be indicated.

They are What You made Them

Assuming, however, that like nine out of ten children you teen-ager alternates between angel and devil with a speed that makes you dizzy, you must still remember that at bottom he is what you made him. His tastes, temperament, and even “aptitudes” are basically what you have encouraged or discouraged in him, partly by your teaching but far more by your influence and example. For instance, his interest or lack of interest in reading will mainly depend on whether he saw that it gave you pleasure, and so indirectly made life pleasanter for him, or that you treated it as an arduous and exacting duty. “Heredity” has no effect in such matters that can be discovered.

I was once acquainted with the family of a world-famous musician who was entirely confident that at least some of his eight children would continue his fame when age slowed his flying fingers. Yet of all eight, just one—an obedient and over-loyal daughter—ever made a living out of music, and she was at best a competent musical mechanic; while all seven others hated music and claimed to be practically “tone-deaf.” The trouble was, “Papa” was a German of the old school to whom music was a discipline, not primarily a source of happiness and self-expression, so that at the earliest opportunity the children ran from it as many preachers’ sons run from religion.

The same thing will happen to your children in so far as they eventually dare to be themselves, not empty shadows of you. Whether it is good manners, interest in reading, love of art, a knack for figures, or a passion for gold, anything they saw you honestly enjoy will appeal to them, and whatever you tried

to enforce upon them, they will run away from the first chance they get. This may not be an unmixed misfortune for them if they were not too completely robbed of their initiative: many a successful person has chosen his career precisely because it was as far as he could get from the parental pattern. The book-keeper's son becomes a painter and the puritanic mother's daughter a toe dancer. But the cost of so complete a break is usually a degree of inner tension which puts the child at a disadvantage compared with the boy or girl who can swim with the current of parental tastes and interests. Your job is not to try to change the basic character or temperament of your teenager, but to take him as he is, and help him learn how to adapt the sort of person he is to the demands of society and the possibilities of finding a place in it. And it will still make a tremendous difference whether he feels you are "for him or agin him" in the hardest job that he will ever have to tackle—a job which the best of us have never totally accomplished—growing from a child to a mature man or woman.

The Biggest Problem

There is one phase of this task your child will find especially perplexing and not seldom terrifying, although it will be immeasurably less so if your previous attitude toward it has been what it should be. Somewhere in his early teens your boy, at least, will find himself swept by a tide of desires and urges which he did not ask for, and which he can no more hold back than King Canute could the ocean. The facts on this subject which psychologists and social students have long surmised on the basis of their limited experience with a few scores or hundreds of adolescents have now been established beyond reasonable doubt by the researches of Professor Kinsey and his collaborators, so that I can now state as fact what was before only my profound personal conviction. And there are no facts in all the world which need more desperately to be faced, accepted, and intelligently dealt with than these.

Whether you like it or not—and whether *he* likes it or not, either—your boy in his early teens will have sexual desires for which *he will find some sort of outlet*. Or at least this will be so

unless he is one of a tiny and tragic minority whose minds are so warped by terror of parental disapproval that they never will be really human and probably never quite sane. In varying degrees and proportions your son will be irresistibly impelled to satisfy the demands of nature by erotic dreams, masturbation, homosexual relations, "petting" with members of the other sex, or sexual intercourse, either with prostitutes or with girls from his own or some other social level. All he can do—and all you can influence him in doing—is to make a choice among these outlets, or at least choose some in preference to others. he *cannot* avoid them all completely. If you doubt this, let me ask you, my male reader. Were *you* able to control your sexual desires completely at sixteen or seventeen? Neither was I, nor was any other boy I ever knew of.

But again, to make your adolescent's problem all the harder, almost anything he does will have to be done in the face of opposition—often under threat of legal punishment or social ostracism—by a world too immature to dare to face the truth that human beings are as Nature (or God) made them, and that to attempt to make them otherwise will only warp them out of normal semblance.

What You can do

What, then, can you do to help the lad you love so much, who needs your help so desperately?

First and foremost, you can *tell him the truth*. And if you don't know it, you can learn it from the findings of contemporary scientific research. It may be part of your task to warn him of the dangers of venereal infection and the social consequences of "corrupting" other children's "morals," or inducing pregnancy outside of marriage. But don't use these risks to scare him into being "virtuous," because there is much less chance that they will have this effect than that they will fill him with neurotic terror over what he may have done at times when his impulses were too strong to let him think of anything but their immediate satisfaction. The Army long tried the "fright treatment," and has recently abandoned it as ineffectual.

Even more essential to your adolescent's happiness and sanity is that you save him from believing the abominable lies you may

have been taught in your own youth—such lies as that “wet dreams” (which no boy can possibly control) are “weakening,” or that masturbation is likely to make him impotent or insane. For such notions—and thousands of others like them which your boy may still encounter—will painfully reinforce the sex guilt which until now has been relatively latent, but which now becomes the major enemy of his mental health and of the confidence in himself that will empower him to take his place in the adult world when the time comes.

Like thousands of lads of his age and generation, William J. had been assured that adolescent acne—of which he had quite a bad case—was caused by masturbation. The fact may well be that the emotional disturbances young people go through in their conflict with their natural impulses has some definite relation to this trouble, though the “winners” in the conflict are, if anything, more apt to suffer from it than the “losers.” But to William, his pimples became a veritable Mark of Cain, so shameful that he slunk along the back streets on the way to school and did not dare to appear at parties until several years later. The lie did not cure him of his “vicious habit”; all that it accomplished was to set back his social adjustment for a number of years and take most of the happiness out of his adolescence.

Other youngsters have similar ideas about blushing—in fact, I have never seen a case of uncontrollable blushing which did not start with some sort of sex guilt, usually based on masturbation. And I have seen boys and girls whose fear that somebody might see them blush and learn their shameful secret became so intense that they would not go out of doors by daylight, and would cross the street at night to avoid street lamps

An Unnecessary Load

Your child will have no such load to carry unless you have early handed on to him the fears you have kept buried in your secret heart since your own childhood. But he still will need help against morbid gossip and the social atmosphere he lives in. You can do much to determine whether he spends sleepless nights in wrestling with “temptation” (nearly always ultimately

losing) or conserves his energy for battles which he has a chance of winning, and in which success will have real value for him. No one knows how many times a youngster's secret struggles with his sexual impulses have been the real reason for his failing in examinations which he ought to have passed easily, or losing athletic contests he could have won without difficulty. Don't "pry" into this matter, but if your boy comes to you for advice (as he will if you have earned and kept his confidence) you can help him choose the forms of release that will tide him over with the least tension and danger until he is old enough to marry and achieve the one completely satisfying sexual adjustment.

As to just what advice you should give him, I have no desire to "dictate." I can only give you such facts as seem to have been proved and leave you to form your own opinions. One of these facts is that the freer a boy feels to satisfy himself with masturbation and the forms of sex play generally known as "petting," the less likely he will be to have promiscuous sex relations before marriage. And distasteful as they may be from an older person's standpoint, these practices do serve as "safety valves" and are absolutely harmless except for the effects of whatever guilt or shame is attached to them. In fact, most of the men I have known who go to prostitutes say that they do so mainly because they have been brought up to think it does them less harm than to practise masturbation.

What about Girls?

A girl's adolescent problems are even more complex than a boy's, though to unthinking parents they may appear relatively simple. The onset of menstruation need not be unduly terrifying or unpleasant to a girl who has been told what she must expect and the reason for it, especially now that girls no longer are subjected to the enforced invalidism that their mothers and grandmothers endured. Subject to her doctor's supervision, there is no reason why a healthy girl should not do practically everything during her period that she does at any other time. But the menstrual process never will be altogether pleasant, especially since it involves at least an unconscious reinforcement of early resentment at the disadvantages of being a girl. And it

will be worse for your girl if she is not protected from the mass of superstitions with which "old wives" still surround this natural process. The idea that menstruation is something a girl should be ashamed of, or that if a man should know about it it would in some strange way put her in his power is wholly without foundation, and you will be wise to make sure nobody has told your girl such nonsense or, if this has happened, that she knows enough not to believe it.

A more serious complication is the fact that a girl's sexual feelings *can be* much more fully repressed than a boy's—even in some cases to the point where she becomes entirely unconscious of them. This condition may be reassuring to her parents, but the girl herself will pretty certainly pay dearly for it later in the form of inhibitions against marriage, marital frigidity, and occasionally intense conscious sexual frustration after it is "too late to do anything about it." But only a relatively small minority of girls to-day escape the conscious pressure of the normal adolescent sex urge and, like boys, those who do feel that pressure almost always find it more than they can wholly control. Masturbation is perhaps less universal among girls than boys, but it is still extremely widespread and with the wrong mental attitude on the girl's part or her parents' may bring the same needless agonies of self-condemnation.

"Petting"

Petting also is a greater problem to girls than to boys, for several reasons. It is apt at first to frighten them more and to make them feel more guilty; in some social groups, it is a black mark on their reputations, and, finally, it is much less likely to lead to a release of tension through sexual climax or orgasm—as will usually happen in a boy's case if the intimacies are long enough continued. For a girl who does not dare to let herself do anything about this, the resulting strain may work considerable damage, not only by causing "nervousness," but by making her persuade herself she is "in love" and perhaps marry the first man who asks her. One young woman complained after years of marital unhappiness: "What were we girls to do? We would go out on dates and get all excited and the boys would stop off at a brothel on the way home, while all we could do was

lie awake and have the jitters. We *had* to get married. But I wish to God I could have waited a little longer."

With your daughter no less than your son, your duty as an adult, modern-minded parent is to help her not to be ashamed of having sexual desires or feel guilty of the way she may have yielded to them, though it may be necessary to help her to realize how unwise some of these ways are. At least make sure that she clearly understands her own anatomy and physiology and knows under what conditions she is likely to "lose her virginity" or to become pregnant. For not only is ignorance of such facts the chief reason for girls "getting into trouble," but conversely, I have known girls to go through weeks of terror thinking they were going to have a baby because they had let a young man kiss them passionately. Try to keep your girl from thinking—as many girls still do—that the fact that she enjoys a certain young man's kisses and gets "weak in the knees" when he holds her in his arms means that she is experiencing the coming of true love and ought to feel broken-hearted or humiliated if he does not propose marriage. For sex can be as impersonal as hunger can be indiscriminating, and total or relative starvation is not the condition under which we are most apt to satisfy, either craving wisely. That is one reason why I heartily believe it is a mistake to allow a girl to grow up thinking she must not let herself be kissed—still less, enjoy it—until she is sure she has found the "one right man." There is far more wisdom in the co-ed's answer to the dean of women who rebuked her for being seen kissing a young man to whom she was not engaged: "But how can I tell whether I want to be engaged to him if he has never kissed me?"

The question of how far a girl damages her chances of marriage by its being known that she is not a virgin depends largely on how old she is, and still more on the social group she moves in. For, as Professor Kinsey points out, sexual standards vary widely at different social levels as well as in different sections of the country. Certainly the day is over when a girl "with a past" has lost all hope of marrying a man who loves and will respect her, though the probability will be much greater in one of the larger cities and with people who consider themselves sophisticated. The main point is that a girl who has made one or more "slips" be kept from accepting the idea that she is permanently

soiled or degraded, for this is sheer nonsense. Some of the happiest—and most faithful—wives I know had as extensive sexual experience before marriage as their husbands, and their husbands are aware of the fact. But that does not make it less true that in general a girl who can be content with minor sexual outlets before she is married will avoid a lot of complications, and that the less dread or shame she has of what she really wants, the more easily she will be able to postpone the time when she allows herself to get it.

You can Ease the Tension

Again, although neither boys nor girls are likely to resist the pressure of the sex urge altogether unless they are pathologically frightened or repressed, how strong that pressure will be depends partly on conditions which their parents can do much to modify in either direction. For one thing, as has already been suggested, guilt and nervous tension tend to increase, not to lessen anyone's preoccupation with forbidden satisfactions. But besides that, since sex is just one phase of the all-embracing quest of pleasure, the extent of anyone's absorption with it depends partly on how far his need of pleasure fails of finding satisfaction through non-sexual channels. The youngster who feels his parents do not love him or don't want him to have fun "the way the other kids do" is far more apt to get into sexual scrapes than one who is affectionately treated and who knows that Dad and Mom are on his side and want him to have all the good times he reasonably can. I have never known a boy or girl who got on happily at home, for instance, to run away and get married, or even fall prematurely in love.

If you think I have devoted too much of this chapter to discussing sex, I am afraid you have forgotten how it feels to be an adolescent. For especially if he does not yet have to worry about how to make a living, sex to the teen-ager is life's central problem, and the subject that is oftener in his (or her) mind than any other. It is what both boys and girls talk about most when they are alone with members of their own sex, and nowadays often with those of the other. And if they don't talk to *you* about it, it is probably because they are afraid you wouldn't "understand" them.

Emotional Independence

At the same time, there is a point beyond which a teen-ager's talking to you too much or attaching too much weight to your opinions is a bad sign. For next to the sexual problem, the great task to be begun at this age is that of achieving emotional independence—learning to dare to hold one's own opinions and take the responsibility for one's own actions. And because it is rarely possible to break a firm tie without violence, adolescence normally and properly involves what will seem to most parents like rebellion. As you test the ice before you dare to skate on it, an adolescent will make at least tentative attempts to do things *his* way which amount primarily to doing them the opposite of your way. In order to grow up, he has to convince himself that he can disagree with you and even disobey you without the sky's falling. And some of the ways in which he will do this will strike you as dangerous or silly, or a little of both. By the time this book appears I dare say that some other type of dancing will have superseded jitter-bugging, and new idols will have dethroned Johnson and Sinatra. But whatever form the change takes, you will probably regard it with disfavour, and the more you express this disfavour, the stronger the "craze" will become.

Don't worry about it! For one thing, the very prevalence of "crazes" grows out of the fact that the teen-ager, secretly appalled at his temerity in departing from your tastes and standards, takes refuge in uniformity of thought and feeling, in dress, phraseology, and gesture with the other members of his generation. Even the "original" ideas he avows with such pride are unconsciously borrowed from his teachers, his adopted heroes and heroines, or the books he has read. But try not to let him know you know this. He needs to be treated like an adult before he deserves it, or he never will have the courage to become one. So if he tries to convince you that your economic views are antiquated or your taste in music is outlandishly old-fashioned, take him seriously and give his ideas a hearing—there might even be truth in them. I spent hours at sixteen trying to convince my father of Kipling's superiority to Shakespeare, and I am still grateful to him for not telling me that I was too young to know anything about such matters.

Education and a Job

Two fields in which you must try to strike a balance between helping your child see the facts as clearly as he can and trying to force your preferences on him are the extent of his schooling (if you can afford to give him all he wants of it) and his choice of a business or profession. There is no question that a college education can be of enormous value to a boy or girl who is fitted for it, and who wants it enough to be willing to work at, or even *for*, it. And not least of its advantages is one too little realized by most people the fact that it can enlarge one's range of interests and make life forever after a source of more different kinds of pleasure. But unless by the time your child is old enough you have been able to make him see learning as a source of satisfaction, even for its own sake, forcing him to go to college against his will wastes his time and your money. If he "wakes up" later, it will not be too hard for him to make up for what he has missed and he will do it more effectively of his own free will than to please you. And all this is as true, if not more so, of your daughter as of your son.

When it comes to choosing a profession, if there is one you particularly want a child to follow, you have every right to picture it to him as attractively as you honestly can, though, as I have said, the way you obviously *feel* about it will mean more to him than anything you can say. But don't try to exert moral or financial pressure. More people have lost needless years out of their lives by going into work for which they were not suited—and still more important, which they did not really like—to please their parents than in any other way that I can think of. Fortunately nowadays we have the means of finding out with reasonable accuracy what sort of work any given person will do best and with least physical or mental friction. And while the need to find the one right job is sometimes exaggerated, any boy or girl who has no idea what to do should be given a thorough "aptitude test."

There are few ways in which you can hold back a child's growing to maturity more effectively than by giving him the feeling that he "doesn't have to work unless he wants to." And again this applies with the same force to both sexes. Nothing gives a person quite the same self-confidence as being able to

earn and spend his own money, and while there are rare exceptions (for example, members of the British "leisure class" such as Charles Darwin), people who have never done this usually have the same dependent attitude in other matters as they do about finances. No matter how much you love your daughter, for example, you cannot be absolutely certain either that she will get married or that you will always be around for her to turn to. So fit her to earn her living, and for preference let her do it long enough to gain the feeling that she always can take care of herself if she has to. It will even help her take a different and more adult attitude toward her husband if and when she finds one.

Getting Away from Home

I sometimes feel that there "ought to be a law" forbidding any child to live at home after the age of twenty-one; and many children would be better off to leave before that. The question of "morals" which disturbs so many parents may be dismissed with the simple statement that a child who cannot be "trusted" by his middle teens will not be really safe at any age. Boarding schools are apt to be somewhat unhealthy because they tend to prolong the "period of normal homosexuality" unduly, and may fix it as a settled pattern. But to go away from home to college—or even to take a job—is better for the average child from, say, eighteen on than staying with his or her parents. And one reason for this is the difficulty that so many parents have in learning to keep hands off the child's choice in love and marriage.

I know one lovely young woman, for example, who apparently has wrecked her life through dissipation, yet might have been well and happy if her mother had not tried so hard to make sure that she did not marry the wrong man. Actually Mrs. H., the mother, had a prejudice against all men on the basis of her own unhappy marriage, and her technique with her daughter was so subtle that she nearly managed to keep Grace from marrying at all. What Grace did was to elope and marry a brilliant but alcoholic artist whom she had met only two or three times—and to regret it even before her honeymoon was over. For she soon learned he was interested only in the fact that she had

enough money to keep him in whisky without having to work for it. As she told me. "I just had to marry someone Mother never had met because the moment I brought a man home she would manage one way or another to make him look foolish, and then kid me out of being interested in him." Grace's marriage left her so completely disillusioned that when I last saw her she had become an alcoholic herself.

Any parent whose child—and especially a child of the same sex—is considering marriage tends instinctively to see the situation from the standpoint of how he or she would feel about marrying the prospective partner. A mother will say, for instance, "I cannot bear to stand by and watch my daughter make the same mistake that I did." To which one might answer: "That is the one mistake your daughter *can't* make because she is not you and the man she wants to marry is not your husband. If she is wrong, she will be making her own mistake, and may be just as helpless as you are now to let her daughter profit by it."

You cannot Always "Save" Them

If you love your children, one of your worst pitfalls will be your reluctance to admit that there are dangers, heartaches, and mistakes from which you cannot protect them. And the fact that, as the years pass, all of us are more and more inclined to "play safe" makes us want to hold our children back from taking even the same sort of chances we ourselves took with no harm done at the same age. Mothers who married poor, struggling young men often forget that their husbands ultimately made good, and shrink from the idea of their daughters marrying young men with no assets except courage and ambition.

For that matter, there are parents who try too hard to hold their boys and girls back from taking business chances. Mrs. J. was nearly frantic when the grown-up son she still called Willie told her he had resigned the best job he had ever had—a job at which he earned more than his father did—to go to New York and try his luck as a freelance writer. She argued and pleaded, wept and even raged, until the young man almost but not quite gave up his idea. Yet now, after ten years, no one but Willie himself is as glad as she is that she could not shake his resolution, for he has become a leading Hollywood and Broadway

playwright whose name you would recognize immediately if I could reveal it to you.

I'll admit all children aren't so right in going their own way as William J. was. Plenty of them have left home, only to come back sore and beaten, admitting they wished they had taken their parents' advice. And yet in the long run even the defeated ones will have the satisfaction of knowing that they tried; they won't always have to wonder whether life might have been different if they had had the nerve to do what they wanted.

The harsh truth is, once our children reach mature years it is easier for most of us to be hindrances than real helps to them. Naturally there are things we can do for them even after their marriage—things like staying with the baby when they want to take an evening off, or helping them tide over a financial crisis. But the less important part we play in their lives and the less advice we offer—or consent to give—them, the better for both sides. Trite as the expression may be, they have their lives to live and the right to make—and profit by—their own mistakes, from which they will learn more than they can from the mistakes we are just as likely to make for them.

Parental Parasites

I know of no worse injury one human being can do to another than that a parent does by becoming an emotional parasite on a child's life. And the worst of it is that this is so often done under the pretext of devoted love on one side and loyalty on the other; though, of course, the "love" is mere possessiveness, and the "loyalty" part guilt and part fear of adult responsibility. The typical mother who proclaims that she "lives for her children" is much more apt really to be living *on* them. I know scores of men and women well on into middle age who never married because they were made to feel it was their duty to care for an ageing parent—nearly always of the opposite sex. And I know too many cases where the repressed sexual "fixation" which the parent has unconsciously encouraged has turned the child's active sex life into "unnatural" channels. One particularly sweet old lady I know, when her forty-year-old son asked if he might bring some friends home for a visit, wrote him frankly,

"Of course, dear, I will be delighted to welcome any friends of yours *as long as they are not women*" And at heart she must have known she had no cause to worry, since her son is a confirmed homosexual, as all his friends are, and as a large share of men who are too devoted to their mothers become.

Here again the mothers are no more "to blame" than the occasional fathers who cripple their daughters' lives in the same way. These parents have simply never dared to "play fair" and learn to get on with people whom they had to treat as equals. They have been like the awkward, maladjusted child who can feel comfortable only when he is with children younger than himself (a "king of the kids," we used to call this type in my youth) except that in dealing with a son or daughter you have the added advantage of their having started life dependent on you and the fact that you could make them feel devotion to you was a "sacred duty."

You have Earned Your Freedom

If you have really grown up yourself, the time when your children do not greatly need you any longer may be one of the best parts of your life. For now, at last, you have leisure—and, I hope, sufficient money—to do all the things which you have always wanted to do but had to forgo because of the children's claims upon you. You have fairly earned your freedom to travel, ride your hobbies, take an active interest in the life of your community, or go back to school and study the subjects you have always wanted to know more about. You may even hope to do the best work of your life in art, science, or business since, although your body does not feel as energetic as it once did, your mind can be just as active as it ever was, and freer from distractions.

What has bringing up a family got you, now the job is finished? The sense of worth-while achievement which in later years becomes the necessary and completely satisfying supplement of simpler pleasures, even though it never can or should replace these. Whatever your children may accomplish, you may always know that it was you who made it possible, and the less you insist on their recognizing this fact, the more gladly and wholeheartedly they will do so. And, finally, if your marriage has

become what marriage can be, you and your mate will have the deep satisfaction of being at last "alone together" again, and reviving and enriching the dear intimacies of the past with all that you have done and may still hope to do together.

PART FIVE

OBSTACLES AND DETOURS

CHAPTER XVII

HOW TO LIVE ON HALF A LOAF

WHEN DOCTORS PERFORM AN autopsy, it is not uncommon for them to find that, besides the injury or disease that killed him, the patient had other conditions, any of which might well have been fatal, but to which his body had somehow adjusted itself by such methods as encysting (walling off) infection, letting circulation find new channels, or having part of an organ take over the whole organ's function. Your mind, if it has to, can do much the same thing—often to a degree that would seem impossible to anyone who was not obliged to make such an adjustment. Recalling the fact that your mind's function is to show you how to adapt your behaviour to reality so as to find happiness or pleasure, this means that you can—or could—be happy under circumstances and in spite of obstacles which you first imagined put happiness out of the question.

I am not claiming that there are no situations to which even the most truly adult person might not be unable to adjust. I doubt, for example, whether anyone could have been happy as a prisoner in Dachau, though I dare say some prisoners had moments of happiness; and there are stages of acute physical suffering in which the most mature-minded person could hardly be conscious of anything but pain. But there are few long-enduring situations to which a person with an adult and adaptable mind cannot find some way of adjusting himself so as to be reasonably happy—or at least contented—most of the time. The name of Miss Helen Keller will be likely to occur to you in this connection, and I happen to know that her cheerfulness is not a pose. Most of you must also know crippled or handicapped

persons who have managed to achieve a satisfying life in spite of seeming insuperable difficulties. For that matter, it is a rare if not non-existent person who has everything he wants, or is not handicapped in one way or another, so that nearly anyone who would find happiness must learn to accept the fact that "half a loaf is better than no bread."

Pleasures Anyone can Enjoy

No matter how small your fraction of a loaf is, there are some emotional "vitamins" it is practically sure to contain. For one thing, nobody's life is wholly lacking in the simpler, "earthier" types of pleasure such as eating when you are hungry or going to sleep when you are tired; and most of us can get more enjoyment from these if we do not happen to have been brought up to regard them as of no importance. I do not advocate turning food crank, but I knew a man once who was a disciple of the "Fletcherizing" school who would rave over the delicious flavour of a properly chewed piece of bread with as much enthusiasm as if it had been roast pheasant. And anyone who saw military service in the field knows how delightful his first nights in a real bed were—even if he had it to himself. In the same way, people who have lost their sight or hearing get proportionately greater pleasure out of their remaining senses. I even discovered long ago an almost erotic pleasure in deep breathing, especially if you have good fresh air to breathe. Learn to use all of your senses instead of despising them as "carnal" and you will get a lot of fun at no cost whatever.

Again, there are few if any of us so unfortunate or handicapped that we cannot find satisfaction in human relationships, even though these may not include love in the romantic or sexual sense. Nine out of ten people you meet are eagerly looking for someone to listen to them and to "understand" them; and if you are not too exigent about demanding an immediate return of interest and affection, you will get them in the long run. If you say the average person bores you, I can only answer that it is your own fault: you have never learned to draw him out to talk about his special skills and hobbies, his "philosophy of life" (and only a professional philosopher is boring on this subject), and his secret aspirations and ambitions. Even if you

cannot "warm up" to the majority of people, there is still nothing to prevent your studying psychology, and to a psychologist all human beings are perennially interesting if only as specimens or problems

For that matter, any person who is chronically bored creates the presumption that he is not really grown up. For boredom is merely irritation at not having things your own way, and if it becomes a mental habit, it involves refusing either to accept the fact that life is not just as you want it, or to try to make the best of it "as is." It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that nobody who can think should ever be bored, though just thinking—if it represents the quest of truth rather than brooding over your misfortunes—can be a most pleasurable occupation. But certainly no one should be chronically bored who can read and who has reading matter within reach. Indeed, ceasing to study and learn new things, either out of fear that your secure convictions will be "upset," or in more or less unconscious protest against your lot, is "biting off your nose to spite your face" if anything is. For learning is the one pleasure that will never grow less and the best of all ways to make up to yourself for your inability to do whatever else your handicaps keep you from doing.

Barriers to Adjustment

Two things mainly keep us from accepting our half—or three-quarters, or one-quarter—of a loaf with good grace and drive us to endless clamouring and searching for a whole one. First there is the childish practice of letting our emotions become "fixated" on one special way of getting satisfaction instead of looking for other ways if the first one is barred to us. I have already spoken of the unreality of being permanently broken-hearted just because one member of the other sex won't love you. But people can be just as childishly fixated on one type of personal ambition, such as getting their names in the Social Register or winning success in a particular career.

Gloria T., like many other girls, wanted to be an actress. And the reason, though she did not know it, was much like what prompts most other members of her sex who seek the same goal. She had grown up in a family in which both her parents, but

especially the father, whom she idolized in secret, gave all their attention and affection to her brothers and ignored her because she was "only a girl." Stage success to her mind represented the one way of proving that she deserved to be noticed and applauded as her brothers had been for success in marksmanship or riding. And so, though she had done rather brilliantly in college and was offered good positions both in business and at teaching, just as soon as she could scrape the railroad fare together she headed for Broadway.

So, of course, do hundreds of small-town girls each year, and most of them, after they have realized that they don't have what it takes to be an actress (or can't find a manager who thinks so), give up trying. They go back home, find some other job in the big city, or learn to be satisfied with the admiration of a husband and a family of children. But Gloria is not like that. Although men found her attractive, she had little or no interest in them, and while sometimes in sheer desperation she took jobs and did well at them, she invariably quit as soon as she had made enough to live on for a few weeks and went back to haunting managerial offices and facing the long run of disappointments. At fifty, the nearest she has come to success was a "bit part" in one long-run hit, and since that closed she has been "at liberty" and likely to remain so. She has lost whatever looks she once had, and there's every likelihood that, being too proud to accept help, she will ultimately die of "malnutrition." Yet her resolution is as strong—and basically childish—as it was when she was twenty.

Actually, Gloria had few "handicaps" compared with the great majority of people. Yet she let her one lack—the lack of dramatic ability which she never has admitted—bar her way not only to most of life's normal satisfactions but to what she really wanted and might have achieved by other means but for her grim determination to deny that any other means existed. And the woods are full of people like her—people who feel hopelessly "defeated" because fortune or their limitations have prevented their doing or getting the one thing that they had set their hearts on. There are would-be singers with no voice to speak of, writers who have nothing to say, dancers who have been crippled in accidents, and so on and on indefinitely. And there is scarcely one out of a hundred of them who might not

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have had a satisfying life by being willing to adjust himself to facts and his own limitations.

Don't be Sorry for Yourself

The other and even more effective barrier to getting enough enjoyment out of your 'half loaf to keep you reasonably happy is self-pity, the subtlest and deadliest of mental poisons. And the strange thing is, the person who indulges in self-pity nearly always *justifies* his doing so by listing the misfortunes he has undeservedly suffered. You might as well say you "had a perfect right" to have tuberculosis! For the issue is not whether you are justified in brooding or nursing a grievance; it is *the effect* these habits have on you, no matter how badly off you may be. And part of that effect is to make your sufferings worse—or at least seem worse to you. If you were suing someone for damages, you would naturally do your best to make your injuries appear as grave as possible; you would groan a little louder and limp just a bit worse than was absolutely necessary. But self-pity is a sort of damage suit against the cosmos, or against specific people whom you hold responsible for your condition, and you have the same incentive to make your wrongs as unbearable as your imagination can devise. In fact, carried to its logical conclusion, the habit of being sorry for yourself may lead you to reject indignantly (though without realizing what you are up to) any way out that may be suggested to you. Nothing makes a person of this type as furious as to suggest that his situation may not, after all, be absolutely hopeless, and he will resent an act of kindness as much as he would an insult.

Lottie R. had had "cause" enough for being sorry for herself. Taken at the age of four from parents whom the court had judged unfit to bring up children, she spent the next twelve years in a barren, crowded institution under discipline that would have seemed harsh to an old-time Army sergeant. Then she was sent to a series of homes as "mother's helper," which meant having to do all the things that a more experienced servant would refuse to have thrust upon her. When Lottie was nineteen, a member of the institution's Board of Visitors became interested in her and attempted to befriend her. She invited the girl—who was pretty and well-mannered—to her home, offered to introduce her to her daughter's friends, and

even arranged a party at which Lottie was to have made an informal debut and bought her a pretty frock to wear on the occasion.

Lottie took the dress with grim politeness, carried it home—and carefully cut it into ribbons! She did not go to the party and, in fact, changed her address to one where she felt sure her would-be benefactress could not find her. “Haven’t I had enough to put up with without taking charity?” she exploded, and felt sorrier for herself than ever. Yet beneath her conscious feelings, as she came to realize later, was the knowledge that if she let herself admit someone had shown real kindness and goodwill toward her she would have been robbed of at least part of the grievance that both let her remain wrapped up in herself and was the alibi for all her failures.

Whatever your handicaps, and no matter how unfairly you have been treated, there’s a lesson you can learn from business practice: “write off” your bad debts and stop wasting time and effort trying to collect what there is no longer any way of getting. Forget what you “have a right to” and concentrate on what is within your reach *as things are*, whether it is fair that they are that way or not. The measure of happiness or of success that life will bring you will be the result of your actions and of other people’s, not what you “deserve” from any childish standpoint. And changing your attitudes and methods will not often fail to make these results more to your liking,

Do You have to Stay Poor?

Startling as it may sound, I believe there are two handicaps which an adult, well-adjusted person rarely needs to endure—poverty and chronic illness.

While one should not hold this out as an inducement to prospective patients, I have rarely seen a person who received successful psycho-therapy who did not later make considerably more money than he ever had made before. Everyone may not do quite as well as Miss L., who began psychoanalysis after ten years as a secretary and who in two years after she finished was earning \$10,000 a year as an advertising copywriter. She had brains and talent to begin with and all that she needed was to free herself to use them. But most of us have more talents than

we realize and few of us would be total failures if we made the most of ourselves. I have no desire either to attack or to uphold the present "economic system"—that is out of my field, but I do believe it provides enough opportunities for anyone to make a decent living who has the will and the adaptability to seek a place in it intelligently. At the bottom of the Big Depression, I knew men and women who could always find jobs without difficulty even though they were not the kind of jobs that would have satisfied them before. And I see no reason to assume that this would not be true in any situation that is likely to arise. So if you feel that the lack of money is the reason why you cannot be happy, take stock of yourself and see if you are looking at your problem realistically, as a grown-up man or woman should.

One possible cause of individual unemployment, for example, is inflexibility of mind, which may be owing to various childish attitudes, especially the fear of trying new things and unwillingness to face the blow to self-esteem that failure in them would bring. The attitude of the woman in the ancient anecdote who answered the question whether she could play the piano. "I don't know—I have never tried," is more constructive than that of the person who says "Oh dear, I am sure I can never do that!" just because the idea is new to him. One of the few good things both world wars have taught a lot of men and women is how many jobs they could do if they had to which they previously had considered partly or entirely "out of their line."

On the transport coming back from World War I, one of my cabin mates was a high-ranking dental officer who told me that for several months he had been stationed in a base hospital in the Argonne Forest. I expressed surprise at the idea that a dentist with so much rank should be at a place where they were handling battle casualties and asked whether he had been doing oral surgery. "Oral, hell!" he answered scornfully. "I did nothing but abdominal surgery from the start of the St. Mihiel drive until the armistice." And I don't doubt that he did a good job. For once you have mastered the essentials of a certain kind of work—in this case, surgery—it takes no more than a bit of courage and imagination, plus some practice, to adapt yourself to any of a dozen variations of it, as the old-time motor-men learned to drive buses. And it not infrequently

will happen that if no one job in any line is open that will make a living for you, several part-time jobs will fill the gap nicely. There was a time after I gave up my first profession when I was receiving small fractions of income from five different occupations at once, and there is no reason why you could not do the same thing if you had to.

The "Unconscious Striker"

Many people stay poor and think they are failures because they are carrying on unconscious one-man (or one-woman) strikes or slowdowns. Especially with essential industries like coal-mining or running railroads, a union can use such methods with tremendous success—at least from its members' standpoint. But the individual who tries to protest inadequate wages or unfair working conditions by refusing to work or to do his best in whatever job he may take only hurts himself and his dependants. Yet, unfortunately, you can do this without realizing what you are doing. Many if not most employees who are rated as "lazy" scant their work because they feel they are not being paid enough or shown enough consideration; and while the employer who has trouble getting help will be wise to recognize this, the worker who really wants to make a living had better accept the fact that almost any job is better than none, and that it is up to him to create the demand for his services which his salary will depend on.

Finally, much needless poverty and hardship are caused by the way some married couples go on having children which they do not want and cannot afford because of a superstitious fear of taking preventive measures—coupled, perhaps, with a no less childish feeling that it is up to someone else to look after them if "God sends them" one baby after another. I remember a poor elevator operator who quite literally worked himself to death to feed and clothe nine children, and who took the help the people in the building gave him as no more than his due. It would doubtless have been psychologically impossible for him to give up the moral nonsense that had been stamped in his mind from childhood, yet his poverty was certainly unnecessary, and the burden that he laid on the community had no excuse for being. Indeed, it is a worse offence against humanity to bring an unwanted child into the world—a child whose whole

life is going to be crippled by the realization that he is unwelcome—than to use the means which science puts at everyone's disposal to limit your family to as many children as you want and can take care of.

You may have seen—and, as you think, corrected—the mistakes of which we have been speaking and yet still not have sufficient money to enjoy life. But unless you are suffering from actual cold and hunger, the real cause of your unhappiness is probably either a stubborn refusal to make the most of the satisfactions that cost nothing at all, or your clinging to the childish notion that what you are “worth” in dollars and cents is the measure of your value as a person. Try to see what kind of self-doubt makes your ego need such superficial reassurance. *Accept yourself*, and you may find in yourself all the resources that a happy life requires

The question of chronic illness and how it can generally be avoided must be postponed to the chapter which will discuss mental ailments. For with the new realization of how closely body and mind are connected, the two subjects are too thoroughly interrelated to be studied separately.

If You never Married

There are people who have never married and not only claim that they are happy, but pity their married friends for all the burdens and restrictions marriage involves. But many such men and women change their tune as they grow older and wind up by feeling that the reason why they get so little satisfaction out of living is that they are all alone in the world. Many women in particular—though men sometimes take substantially the same position—will tell you the reason why they did not marry is that they “never could find the right person,” or that “no one ever asked” or “would accept” them. We are also told by statisticians that in many countries, the United States included, there is so great a “surplus of women” that as many as one girl out of every seven is predestined to remain an old maid whether she wants to be one or not.

The immediate answer to this last point is that, just as those who really wanted jobs most got them even at the depth of the depression, so the girl who really wants a husband can almost

invariably find one if unconscious inhibitions don't prove stronger than her conscious desires. And whatever might be the fate of the "surplus" women in a world where everyone was psychologically normal, as things are, most women and men who have remained single have done so because of their own inner conflicts. The late Dr. Frankwood E. Williams listed being unmarried as involving at least the presumption that the person is neurotic which (as we shall see in due course) is the same as saying he or she is immature emotionally.

As a rule, conscious unwillingness to marry or failure to find a partner is based on one or both of two secret feelings. One of these is inability to accept the imperfections of what any actual partner has to offer because you insist on "everything or nothing"

Miss F., for example, told this story. "In my twenties I fell in love with a man and went around with him for two or three years. In fact, we were engaged and expected to be married. He was several years older than I was and I didn't know at first that he had been married before and divorced. When I found this out, I started wondering whether he could ever love me as much as he must have loved his wife when he first knew her, and I got so disturbed over this that I finally broke off our engagement. Now I am nearly forty and it seems that practically every man I meet and like is either a widower or divorced. Each time I imagine at first that I can forget the other woman, but I always wind up by getting so upset about her that I cannot go on any longer. I would like to get married, but what can I do about it?"

She went on to say that she knew one man of the right age for her who had never married. She wasn't so keen about him, but thought she might get on with him all right if she made up her mind to it. I said this was probably the best thing for her to do, but I did not tell her (since it would have been quite useless) that I wasn't worried over whether my advice was good or bad, because I was quite certain she would no more marry this man than she had the others. Her "dream man" was something no woman could hope to find—one who never has loved anyone, even his mother, till he met her.

As strong as this childish desire to be "first" in the affections of the loved one is fear of sex, based on the residuum of childish sex guilt. This fear may exist in men as well as women, though

men are less likely to avow it because it may seem unmanly. Reluctance to marry because of sex guilt may express itself in roundabout ways, as with the familiar type of people we call fickle, who fall in love with one person after another, but invariably end by finding something wrong with the prospective wife or husband and break off the engagement with the claim that they are "disillusioned."

Yet another evidence of sex fear is the pattern of the person who can fall in love only with someone whom he or she cannot marry. There was Martha J., for instance, whose parents could never get on well together because Mrs. J., the mother, thought all sex a dirty and disgusting business. Martha believes she is modern-minded and feels sorry for the way her mother spoiled her own life with old-fashioned ideas. But while Martha has been in love two or three times, it has always been with a man whom she cannot marry: first a man she had seen only once, but dreamed of for years, then her boss, who never took the slightest interest in her; and, finally, her best friend's husband. In other words, Martha was enough emancipated to admit that she *wanted* love as long as she was sure she would not get it, but that was as far as her unconscious fear of actually giving herself to a man would allow her to go.

Again, both sex guilt and childish perfectionism may take the form of "idealism," like that expressed by the late Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross. After her death her biographer and nephew, Stephen Barton, gave this report of her feelings about marriage: "My aunt said to me at one time that I must not think that she had never known any experience of love. She said she had had her love affairs and romances like other girls, but that in her young womanhood, though she had thought of different young men as possible lovers, no one of them measured up to her ideal of a husband."

After all these years I cannot, of course, be certain what Miss Barton's "ideal" was, and I doubt whether she was clearly conscious of it herself. But, considering the generation she belonged to, I feel pretty sure it included a degree of "pure-mindedness" that left little room for normal sexual feelings. And I dare say that the average woman who can never find a man she feels is "worthy of her" is unconsciously demanding one who has no sexual desires.

Sexual Inversion

Finally, there is a much larger proportion of both men and women than most of us had suspected until lately whose reluctance to be married is based on the fact that, consciously or not, they are incapable of sexual feeling except for another member of their own sex. Let me repeat what I have already implied in discussing psycho-sexual evolution: Homosexuality or "inversion" is not a form of depravity, still less "degeneracy." It is a form of arrested emotional development—again basically owing to sex guilt—for which people are in no way to blame. If the rest of us have any feeling for the invert it should be not disapproval or disgust, but sympathy for all that he is missing. There can be no clearer demonstration of how much he or she does miss than the delight of the homosexual who has managed to outgrow his childish fears and become "normal." I have seen this happen both with and without the aid of psychotherapy, though seldom except in comparatively mild cases. But whether he outgrows his inversion or not, it is safe to say that the homosexual was not "born that way," but is suffering the effect of early conditioning over which he had no control. With such people, as with others who find it impossible to marry, the truth is that in most cases they are happier single, whether they admit it or not. If they force themselves to marry because "it is the thing to do," or from fear of what people will say, they make a most tragic mistake from both their own and their partners' standpoints. The man who finds he has "married an old maid" is in a painful situation, but he is no worse off than she is. And the homosexual who has married in the hope of curing himself is likely to end with a worse fear and loathing of sexual contact with a member of the other sex than ever.

In short, if you are unmarried and sometimes feel lonely, it will usually be wise to recognize that your condition is not because of hard luck, but because of your own character and disposition, and that since these are not apt to change, you might as well accept yourself as you are and look for such happiness as life can bring that sort of person. Your sexual problem—and it's doubtful whether sex will cease to be a problem until you reach fairly advanced old age—is more difficult to solve than it would be if you were married, and any solution of it

which I might suggest would be "immoral" or "indecent" from a legal standpoint, so I shall make no suggestions. All I will advise is that you try to realize that nature made you neither sexless nor (if you are like most people) able to become so. And since, therefore, there is every likelihood that you will occasionally violate the artificial standards which law and convention try to maintain, your one hope is to accept your limitations—or what moralists would call your weaknesses—and worry about them no more than you have to.

Spread Yourself Out

The task of attaining something to replace the satisfactions other people find in the love of a person who "belongs to them" is not easy, but you must not give it up as hopeless. What you must do is to learn to spread yourself out thinner than is necessary for a married man or woman.

A good many years ago I spent a day at a "tree nursery." It's the sort of place that you would go to if you were building a house and wanted to plant full-sized trees around it. If you live in New York, you will remember the full-grown elms that were planted—and still flourish—on Fifth Avenue in front of Radio City. They come from the sort of place that I mean.

You can buy trees like that and have them set up and guaranteed to grow "or your money refunded," but if you took a truck and a crew of men out to the woods and tried to bring back a normal grown tree of the same size it would die on your hands. Do you know why?

Because under ordinary circumstances any tree, while it has many roots, develops one big one called a taproot which is its main source of nourishment. This root may be half as thick as the tree, and is usually longer than the tree is high. It is so unwieldy that you could not move the tree unless you cut it; but once the taproot is severed, the tree starves to death, and you have nothing for your work but a few cords of kindling. So at a tree nursery each tree is transplanted every year or so from the time when it is a sapling, and instead of growing a taproot, it has a mass of matted small ones, many of which may be cut if necessary without doing any serious damage.

The tree with the mass of small roots and no single big one is

a picture of the way an unmarried person must learn to live to avoid heartbreak and disaster. I could put the same rule a bit differently by saying: "Don't ever 'marry' anything or anybody but a wife or husband." Too intense a friendship, even with a member of your own sex, is one of the riskiest ways of "putting all your eggs in one basket." For there seldom is or can be the same union of desires and interests between two members of one sex as between two married people. In a truly great book which unhappily is banned from general circulation, *A Single Woman and Her Emotional Problems*, Dr Laura Hutton writes: "The more friends a single woman has, the more likely is her chief friendship to flourish and endure." And the reason is that as soon as your happiness comes to depend entirely on one other person, your fear that you may sometime lose her (or him) begins to make you possessive and angrily jealous, so that ultimately you lose the capacity to give and share pleasure which friendship depends on. Even in marriage you cannot really get on with a person whom you could not get on without if you absolutely had to—that is, someone on whom you are childishly dependent—and in friendship the self-confidence that comes from knowing you have other interests and ties is even more vital. For that matter—and this is perhaps more often true of women than men, though men are occasionally guilty of it—don't "marry your job." And if you are a woman, don't make an unconscious husband of the man you work for.

A Real "Office Wife"

Miss W. is nearer to sixty than she ever has admitted and for more than half her life she has been secretary to the noted architect, John H. Having been brought up a nice girl, I doubt whether Miss W. ever has allowed herself to dream of her employer as a husband, or even a lover. She would even tell you there are many things about him she dislikes intensely—among them, although she doesn't realize it, the fact that he has never shown the slightest sign of thinking of her as a woman. None the less, she lives for him as absolutely as a wife would, and probably more so. She glories in his successes, and cried herself to sleep the night after she learned that his plans for a new library had been rejected.

Of course, John H. appreciates her loyalty after a fashion. He "would not know how to get along without her," and when he retires—which will be soon, because he is twenty years her senior—he will probably offer her a pension. But when he closes his office, her life will be practically over. For she has been too much absorbed in her work to make any close ties or develop any other interests. To be a good secretary—and how well I know there are not many of them!—is a real career for a woman, but to make a career out of being *one man's* secretary is trying to make a "taproot" out of a relation which cannot bring you enough of the sap of life to keep you alive and growing.

To "give your life to a cause" is better, both because it offers a bigger variety of interests and because causes as a rule do not die. But if you take any cause too seriously, you are apt to grow one-sided, if not out-and-out fanatic, and you will miss other interests and contacts from which you could get much pleasure.

A temptation to which single men and women are both subject is to seek from children the affection and attention they have not learned to get from other adults. And certainly the neglected child—who is numbered by the thousands—offers as real an opportunity for worth-while effort and achievement as anything else in the world. But here again, spread yourself thin! Don't let any one child be the centre of your life, not only because children grow up and eventually turn to companions of their own age, but because a single man or woman—a devoted "uncle" or "aunt"—can be even more possessive than the greediest of mothers. Authorities are even agreed that it is seldom wise for an unmarried person to adopt a child, and most social agencies will not give a child for adoption to a home in which it will not have two foster parents.

In short, the main answer to the "lonely" person's problem is to have as many avenues of approach to life as he or she can. Let me remind you once more that the only type of interest which can never fail you is the multiplicity of subjects about which you can always keep on learning. To draw back into your shell will kill your chance of happiness, and probably make you a hypochondriac; but keep your mind resolutely open and your thoughts turned outward, and you will wonder what can be wrong with the person who complains of being bored and says he has "nothing to live for."

CHAPTER XVIII

“WHAT CAN'T BE CURED .”

“WHAT CAN'T BE CURED must be endured” is an old saying which I was brought up on.

Taken literally, the assertion cannot be disputed. Most of us, although in widely varying degrees, have handicaps or limitations for which there is no known remedy. And while, thanks to various sciences, from psychiatry to plastic surgery, the number of these is shrinking steadily, there are still some things in all our lives which we can only either grin and bear or bear without grinning.

Yet brave as it sounds, the adjuration to endurance still has something in it of the spirit of the good child who accepts unquestioningly what his parents give him because they seem to him so powerful (and perhaps wise) that it would be useless to do otherwise. With emotionally immature adults we see the same idea in the fatalist who feels it is idle to “quarrel with destiny,” or the Moslem to whom even poverty and illness are the “will of Allah”—impious to question or try to escape from. Progress as we Occidentals understand it largely represents the spread of men’s rebellion against such submissiveness. We have learned as we grew up emotionally to avoid more and more of “the ills that flesh is heir to.” And our attitude toward the rest might be expressed (in somewhat dubious English) as “What can’t be cured must be *detoured*.” No matter what stone walls block your progress toward happiness or pleasure, you can nearly always *find a way around them*. And while this may mean your travelling by a more circuitous route than the majority of people, that is still much better than not getting to your destination.

First among the list of things which “can’t be cured” are certain types of physical deformity or mutilation which medical science has not found and perhaps never will find any way of remedying. These range from the scar left from an operation

for a harelip to the loss of limbs or senses. There may be conditions—like that of the hero in the hideous pre-World-War-II novel, *Johnny Get Your Gun*—under which it seems an impertinence to suggest that life possibly could be worth living, but these fortunately are rare. By far the majority of “handicapped” people can—or could—find a detour around their difficulties, and psychology can help them find it. For here, as in almost any other situation, your success in discovering ways of being happy depends largely on how well your *mind* is functioning at its job of showing you how to enjoy life.

Minor Difficulties may be Worst

As one evidence of how largely mental the whole problem of handicaps may be, take the fact that almost uniformly a comparatively slight affliction is a great barrier to happiness than a big one. Two of the most cheerful of my college classmates were a blind man and one who was paralysed from the waist down and had to be carried everywhere he could not travel in a wheel-chair, while I have known a girl who felt her life was ruined by a scarcely noticeable growth of down on her lip, and plenty of men who felt that being under average height kept them incurably at a disadvantage. I have also found it true in the majority of cases that a defect one is born with is more crushing psychologically than one which is due to accident or injury, and that on the whole war injuries do least mental damage of all, provided the wounded man was not neurotic to begin with.

One reason for this is that the sense of insecurity and shame which comes from being different from other people is more painful to a child than to an adult. Children see life in a narrower perspective and, again, their playmates are more merciless than most adults in ridiculing any handicap a child may suffer. Remember the way in which the boys in school laughed at the “fatty,” the lad with the “gimpy” leg, or (as I recall so painfully) the “string-bean.” Children even are more apt than adults to regard a defect as a badge of some mysterious shame, particularly if their parents were so thoughtless as to show embarrassment about it, for it’s harder for a child than an adult to accept the idea that he is not responsible for his shortcomings, and he is

more apt to acquire the notion that his handicaps involve his being punished for some obscure fault or shortcoming. The girl with the downy lip whom I just mentioned, for example, suffered worse because some silly woman in her early adolescence told her that this characteristic marked a "passionate nature"; and while she had but a vague idea of what this meant she knew that "it must be something horrid."

Minor differences from other people may be worse than radical ones because you can only feel really defeated if you try to "play the game," not if you are an obvious spectator. A boy who limps but can still play ball after a fashion is more painfully aware of his inferiority to other boys than one who is legless. And even a girl who, when she grows up, realizes that whatever love she wins must be in spite of her appearance is apt to feel less frustration than one who believes she could have all the men at her feet if only she did not have such thin hair or such a bad complexion. Adler's rule that your unhappiness is measured by the difference between what you expect of yourself and what you can achieve applies particularly to such cases.

"Secondary Gains"

Again, for the person who is truly helpless and out of the running, there are what psychiatry calls "secondary gains," which may be at once a consolation and a source of danger. No one who had a devoted mother as a baby ever quite outgrows enjoying being waited on and taken care of, or receiving a bit more attention than is given to other children. The handicapped child, especially, is apt to get the feeling that his mother loves him more than his brothers and sisters (which indeed is frequently true), and finds such delight in basking in the glow of her affection that he has not much incentive to try to become less helpless and dependent upon her.

It was this same "secondary gain," in fact, which Army and Navy doctors recognized as the strongest potential barrier to the rehabilitation of war casualties. They began by trying to make sure the wounded man did not get "hospitalities," which is basically a revival of the pleasure a child finds in being "coddled." At the risk of seeming—and no doubt sometimes of being—hard-boiled, they started each patient on a "reconditioning

programme," practically from the moment he came out of ether, made him regularly exercise uninjured muscles before he was out of bed; enrolled him, whether he would or no, in study classes, and in general tried to make him realize that his job was *to get well* rather than wait until somebody "cured" him.

Any seriously maimed or injured person is in the same danger as the wounded veteran and needs to accept the same astringent truth: pleasant as it is to have things done for you by other people, it will never make up for the satisfaction you could get from *doing them for yourself*. You may even have to overcome or circumvent your family's opposition to get them to let you do this, as my friend Lieutenant S. did. The lieutenant had the rare distinction of having been commissioned in the Army although he had but one hand: he had lost his right hand in a railroad accident as a civilian. Naturally, he was not assigned to combat duty, but he did an outstanding job in an executive position in a military hospital in New York, and the things he could accomplish with his one hand were amazing. He told me how he had had to get up in the night to practise tying his shoe-laces (which his family saw no sense in his "bothering with") and how he had detoured the humiliation of having to have his meat cut up for him by designing a specially heavy knife with a razor-sharp edge.

There is a nearly endless list of people—some deservedly well known, and some who have never let themselves be noticed if they could avoid it—who have shown how much fun and achievement may remain within the reach of those whom the unthinking would call cripples. A pretty young woman in New Jersey who lost both her legs has earned her living as a model, learned to dance and play golf, and become a happy wife and mother. A young student at a Southern university who has but one arm and one leg plays first-rate football, tennis, and soft ball, and excels at swimming and high diving. There are Harold Russell, the man with the artificial hands who won spectacular success in *The Best Years of Our Lives*, and Paul Wittgenstein, who lost an arm in World War I, yet remained so successful as a concert pianist that Maurice Ravel wrote a "Concerto for the Left Hand Alone" which was dedicated to him. A church organist uses his feet on the pedals almost as much as his hands on the keyboard, yet one of New York's most brilliant organists has

an artificial foot—and few but his personal friends know it. And, finally, there is the famous Wing Commander Bader, the R.A.F. ace, who lost both legs before World War II started, but kept right on flying. You may recall how, when he was forced to land in Holland and was captured, the Germans allowed new artificial limbs to be flown to him—and then took them away when they found he had been using them to try to escape.

“Ordinary People”

Do I hear some reader say: “You make me tired! I know there are people like that, but what have they got to do with an ordinary person like me? I’m no hero!”

One answer might be that these *are* “ordinary people”—or at least the only difference between the two or three of them I have known and the rest of us was that *they saw a little straighter*. They were not sitting down nursing their grievances, nor moaning over how “neglected” they were, as I fear many veterans are bound to do when the war fades out of the average person’s recollection. It is no less inevitably true that the majority of people are “ungrateful” to their erstwhile saviours, once the danger appears to be over, than that there are few families so “devoted” that they will not tire of caring for a person who remains an invalid too long. The one person in the world to whom your happiness will ever really be of primary importance is yourself, and you might as well face it. The less time and strength you spend in crying over spilt milk, the more you will have left to devote to finding how and where to get another, if a smaller, bottle.

If it is a job you are thinking of, there will no doubt be employers who will look sidewise at a worker who is not completely able-bodied, but cold common sense and practical experience are teaching many of them otherwise. For it has been definitely proved that handicapped persons, given jobs within their limitations, are in general better workers—and less prone to accidents—than the average man or woman. And the limitations of handicapped people often are much less than they or others might imagine. One of the most interesting and inspiring people I ever met is a young blind man, Francis J. Affleck, a college graduate and teacher of psychology, who did

his bit during World War II by helping to make gun-sights for bombers!

A fact I have never seen explained too clearly is that as a rule blind people find it easier to adjust themselves to life than deaf ones. Perhaps again it is a matter of the blind being more obviously *hors de combat*, and so not judged by competitive standards, and perhaps the answer is that speech is more important than sight as a bond between one person and another. At all events, the deaf person has a very special problem in not hearing what goes on around him—above all what other folks are saying—and is likely, if he is not careful, to develop a suspicious attitude based on the notion that “they are talking about me behind my back.” One advantage a deaf person has, however, is that hearing is more likely than sight to be lost by gradual stages, so that if you know you are faced with deafness you can forestall many of its handicaps by learning the art of lip-reading. A deaf person who can read lips is comparatively little cut off from the ordinary work and pleasures of life, and will find the rather arduous study he has had to put in more than repaid.

No Chance for Heroics

I will admit you cannot be heroic about bow-legs or a wart on your nose—or, indeed, about being plain homely, although nowadays there are few homely people who can't help themselves considerably by care and good taste in dress and (with a woman) make-up. The afflictions others may laugh at you for taking seriously can be all the harder because they seem trifling to everyone but you. But remember:

Minor afflictions are almost never so conspicuous to other people as the victim is apt to think. For one thing, nobody looks at you as carefully as you look at yourself in the mirror—and for the perhaps unpleasant reason that nobody else is as much interested in the way you look as you are. Check up, for example, on the colour of some of your best friends' eyes—or shut your own and ask someone you know well what colour they are—and you will be surprised how frequently the answer proves to be, “I never noticed.” I knew a young woman who was “terribly self-conscious” over the fact that one of her breasts was larger than the other, yet, although I had seen her every

day for weeks (she was a patient), I had not observed the fact until she told me of it. For that matter *all* self-consciousness, particularly over real or supposed defects, involves a vast exaggeration of our own importance in the eyes and thoughts of others. Once we realize how much less attention is paid to us than we think—and secretly desire—anything which we dislike in our appearance will be much less of a barrier to happiness than our unconscious egotism tends to make it.

But, again, while first impressions are important, did you ever realize how little importance you attach to the appearance of a person you have known for some time, and especially one you are fond of? In the long run it is personality that counts, and by comparison looks scarcely matter. The advertisements you read which imply that no one will love you if you are not good-looking are written to sell cosmetics or "reducing courses." Actually, beauty alone will not make you popular, nor will lack of glamour make your prospects hopeless. In the group I saw the most of when my work was largely with young people, there were two or three girls I considered beauties who never were asked to go out more than once by any one man, while the girl most of the men liked best had a nose a little like a parrot's. The reason, of course, was that Sally had good sense enough to realize she never would win any beauty contests and so took the trouble to be friendlier and more interested (which to a young man means "interesting") than the pretty girls who used to wonder what Sally had that they hadn't. She had to go just a little further to get what she wanted than the other girls did, but she got it. And so can you, if you will only take the trouble.

Racial and Religious Differences

There is another very different kind of handicap which can't be cured but can be effectually detoured if you will make up your mind to it. This rests on a social situation which is nowadays much on the public conscience: the discrimination of which men, women, and children are frequently victims for no reason but that they belong to a minority in race, colour, or religion. Were I writing as a moralist or social critic, I should be as ready to condemn this as wrong as anybody, but to those who are its victims there will be more value in accepting it as a phase

of reality—at least for the time being—and considering what to do about it.

If you are a Jew, a Negro, or a “foreigner” of any kind, you may console yourself with the knowledge that you have a powerful ally in science. As far as I know, no reputable scientist to-day accepts the sort of nonsense about “race” that the German Nazis (and our own home-grown varieties) believe in. Scientifically speaking, there are no such things as “races” in the sense of different kinds of human beings. The fact that all human beings can mate with one another and have fertile offspring proves that they are all of one species, biologically speaking, and even the different varieties are much more alike than different breeds of dogs or cattle. One reason for this, of course, is that there are no “pure breeds,” since in order to produce these, there would have to be long generations of strict regulation which forbade all mating except between males and females who had the desired characteristics. Add to this the fact that, as we now know, traits of personality are not inborn but acquired by association and environment, and the idea that his race or colour will make anyone inherently worse or better than his neighbours is left without so much as a leg to stand on.

It is just as foolish to deny, however, that there are ways in which a Jew is likely to be different from a Gentile or a Texan from a “Boston Brahmin,” even though race is not what creates the difference. As you will remember, the strongest determinant of anybody’s character is what we call his “Super-Ego”—the indelible impressions he received in childhood of the sort of person he should try to be or become. But though each of us receives his Super-Ego mainly from his parents, their ideas and standards were—as ours in our turn will be—materially influenced by the social groups or “cultures” they belonged to. So, besides the individual Super-Ego there is a collective one from which few of us ever wholly escape. And while individuals may vary—in fact, I have seen two members of the same so-called “race” who were more unlike each other than the average Negro and the average white man—people of contrasting backgrounds do seem strange or even alien to one another and no defenders of equality can alter the fact. Even different tastes in food may make the members of one group of people appear alien to those of another—witness the emotional significance of

nicknames like "frog-eater" or "spaghetti-bender." Yet the chances are you will always prefer the kind of food you were brought up on and would gain nothing either by maintaining you have a monopoly on "good taste" or by going hungry to conform to that of others. If you belong to any kind of a minority group (as most of us do in one sense or another) there is no use in pretending that you are "just like other people." You are different, and will have to adjust to it in the same way as we have already seen you must accept the personal characteristics which it is too late to alter.

Don't be Bitter!

The first step toward doing this, although you may not like it, is to try to outgrow your bitterness toward the people who "discriminate against you." For one thing, such feelings will do you more harm than they will anyone else, just as truly as will any other kind of grievance. For another, the "majority" is for the most part simply following the laws of human nature and doing the same things you would do yourself in the same circumstances. Any social group tends to be hostile or suspicious toward those who are "different" from its members, and the less mature emotionally any given group is, the stronger these feelings will be. For children and childish-minded adults always have a sense of insecurity about themselves and cling to their ideas and tastes all the harder because they are secretly uncertain of their value. People whose social position is a little shaky are the most apt to be snobbish and to ridicule behaviour they think Mrs. Post would not approve of, and, as I have said before, a group of adolescents shows no mercy to the child who does not conform to its rigid if perpetually changing fashions.

Nothing does more to intensify the problem of difference than the natural but childish trick of feeling that one of two different things is always "better" than the other. If your tastes are unlike other people's, they are "different," and that's all that can be said about it; you will be making no worse blunder in attempting to convert your neighbours to your way of thinking than in trying to compel yourself to adopt theirs. Yet it is fear of admitting that you are inferior to others which most often makes you try to force yourself into the company of people

whom you actually will not feel as much at home with as with people more like yourself. It is unpleasant to have anyone look down on you, but it will do you no harm if it doesn't stir the hidden springs of self-doubt that have remained in your mind since childhood. We may even go beyond that and say that, although you may be quite unconscious of it, the bitterness you feel toward people who "reject" you as an adult is emotionally a carry-over from the anger you felt toward your parents when they criticized or "shamed" you. There is nothing like a good, plausible grievance in adult life to provide an outlet for the pent-up hatreds which our consciences never would let us express—or frankly admit feeling—toward our parents, or brothers and sisters. And while we have noted that the Nazis mainly took out on the luckless Jews their bitter resentment at the discipline to which they were subjected by their parents, it may be no less true that a Jew whose Gentile neighbours snub him feels a hatred toward them which is out of all proportion to the injury he suffers because now he is faced with an injustice that he can denounce without feeling disloyal.

Sylvia G. was a fanatic worker in "the fight against discrimination"—in fact, she became a Communist largely because it was at Party meetings that she could best make a virtue out of being what she would have called a social outcast. She married a man whom she did not particularly care for because she admired him as a fighter for the cause to which her life was dedicated. But she was not happy, and wound up by recognizing there was something unreal about her preoccupation with the "racial" question. "Do you know," she said one day, "I think the reason why I have been fighting so hard was to keep from seeing how ashamed I am of being ashamed of being Jewish." And this feeling in turn proved to have little relation to race or religion, it was centred on the fact that her father was a poor, immigrant tailor whom she felt it was disloyal for her, with her college education, to look down on, but whom she knew only too well that her more sophisticated friends would regard as a comic figure.

One-man Crusades

This book deals, of course, with individual attitudes and feelings. The injustice of excluding Jews or Negroes from equality

of opportunity for education or from voting rights and civic privileges is something to be fought by collective action, and with all my heart I say, "More-power to those who fight it!" But one-man crusades are seldom any more effective than the one-man strikes we spoke of in the previous chapter. Before you go all out to demand what you believe you have a right to, the mature thing is to stop and think whether your doing so may not cost more than it is worth from any realistic standpoint. For if, as we have seen, insecurity is what makes groups of people hostile to outsiders, anything you do to make the majority feel insecure or frightened will only make them more hostile toward you. And since nothing adds more to a sense of insecurity than a guilty conscience, I strongly suspect that recent efforts to conquer discrimination by making the people who have practised it ashamed of themselves will act in reverse in the long run. I, for one, have heard more stupid people express more anti-Semitic feelings since the publication of such books as *Gentlemen's Agreement* than I had for some years before.

The fact is, you cannot make a person like you or want you around by telling him he ought to—any more than a wife can regain an errant husband's love by making him ashamed of his behaviour. So if what you want is to be welcomed into social circles which you feel are trying to exclude you, the last way on earth to gain your purpose is to make a fuss about it or be needlessly aggressive. Social groups, from college fraternities to "neighbourhoods," are organized for two things: the sense of security that comes from being with those who accept our tastes and standards, and the pleasure we get from associating with "congenial" men and women. You can win sincere acceptance from any such group *only* by proving to its members that you can contribute to the aims for which it was founded. And the more unlike the other members you are, even in superficial matters, the harder this will be to do. For looking behind appearances is something only a few rarely mature people take the trouble to do.

The Conquest of Prejudice

There is no use in inveighing against prejudice; the sole way to conquer it is by education, and this is a slow and often weary

process In the same way that a woman has to be a little better doctor than a man to win equal recognition, even from the members of her own profession, a Negro must be a better singer or a Jew a better baseball player to achieve the same amount of fame and fortune as a so-called Anglo-Saxon. Saying that it "isn't fair" won't change this, and the only thing a person who is at a disadvantage can do is make up his mind whether the things he wants are worth the extra effort he must make to get them.

Before you decide to "work yourself to death" detouring obstacles you cannot remove, ask yourself these questions. Am I looking for enduring satisfaction and a happier life, or trying to vindicate myself against childish notions of inferiority that have no valid basis? Am I seeking recognition for its own sake, or to pacify a wounded ego? Whatever minority you may belong to, you will almost always find enough friends among people like you to keep you from being lonely. And while there are countries where minorities are still in danger of actual persecution, I see little danger that the United States—except for a few backward communities—will ever be one of them. On the whole, a person who does his job well, minds his own business, and does not arouse the community's fear by playing the role of a "disturbing element" will, for the most part, not only remain unmolested but win more respect than he had hoped for. I remember a Jewish watchmaker in the little country town where I had my first parish, forty years ago. He was as much a part of the community as the postmaster or the druggist. No one thought of him as a "Jew"—he was just Izzy Bernstein, and his name seemed no more strange than John Smith.

Finally, while it is foolish to try to console yourself for being different by proving that it means you are "better," it remains true that people of different national and racial backgrounds have special abilities and talents which they will do well to make the most of, and which it would be a real loss to us all to wipe out. To have lived, as most Jews have, for generations in an atmosphere that emphasizes artistic and intellectual interests involves a real "head start" toward achievement along those lines. It would be a poor psychologist indeed who would not gladly concede that most of the best students of psychology are Jewish—in fact two Jews, Freud and Einstein, have made

the outstanding contributions of the twentieth century toward man's intellectual progress Nor is any racial group incapable of adding to the richness of American life and culture without giving up its characteristic institutions. Difference in race, religion, or skin pigmentation is a barrier to happiness if you allow it to be, but there is no barrier I know of which can more effectually be "detoured" if you go about it wisely and maturely.

CHAPTER XIX

IF YOUR MIND IS SICK

YOUR MIND IS THAT PART of your entire self whose job is to show you how to satisfy your physical and emotional needs and by doing so, be happy. In proportion as it does this, we now call it healthy, and in so far as it fails, we call it sick. But since no one is—or perhaps can be—100 per cent. happy in the kind of world we have to live in, it is not surprising that if we are speaking strictly, we are forced to admit that there is no such thing as a completely healthy, “normal” mind—there is even a good deal of argument among psychiatrists as to just what such a mind would be like.

The most plausible and inspiring conjecture I know comes from Dr Ernest Jones, dean of the British psychoanalysts. “The nearest attainable criterion of normality is fearlessness. The most normal person is, like Siegfried, ‘*angstfrei*’ [free from anxiety], but we must be clear that we mean by this not merely manifest courage, but the absence of all the deep reactions that mask unconscious apprehensiveness. Where these are absent we have the willing or even joyous acceptance of life, with all its visitations and chances, that distinguishes the free personality of one who is master of himself.”

Is not this an equally true and inspiring picture of a person who is what we have been calling really adult? Would it not be into such a person that each one of us might have developed if our growth had not been blocked or warped by outside influences, and toward which we can hope to go on progressing in so far as we are able to start growing again? Our minds, thus, are sick or crippled in so far as they keep us from “joyously accepting life.” And certainly from this standpoint there is no one—as Dr. Jones also says—who is altogether healthy, any more than there is anyone whose body functions perfectly in every part of every organ and is free from all trace of infection

Who is Mentally Sick?

But in practice there's a lot of difference between the person who, in spite of an infected sinus or an allergy to ragweed, manages to live in reasonable comfort, and one who is chronically in severe pain or who is disabled. We call the first type of person "well" (to all intents and purposes), and say that the other is sick, though, of course, there are many cases in which it is hard to draw the line between them. In the same way, as long as anyone is free enough from fear and morbid guilt to live an ordinary life—get married, earn a living, and be an accepted member of society—we call him relatively healthy-minded, and save the term, "mentally ill," for those whose minds keep them more or less "out of the running." For example, we should not apply the word "neurotic" to someone who simply felt uncomfortable in a large crowd, but should use it of a man like one I once met who had to resign a highly-paid position because the concern he worked for moved into an office on the twenty-fifth floor, and he could not ride in an elevator without falling in a faint from panic.

Mental illness implies a condition in which, because of some kind of "anxiety," the mind cannot react to a situation—or to certain types of situations—realistically. It sees—or feels—danger where there is none. And its inability to see things as they are is the long-range result of false impressions, usually gained in childhood, which the person is unable to correct because they have been repressed into his unconscious mind, where he cannot get at them. In every such case the way to regain mental health is to find ways of taking a fresh look at one's impressions of life and his neighbours, and of recognizing where his viewpoint is unrealistic and unhealthy. Psychiatrists call this process "gaining insight" but we must remember that it means more than an intellectual understanding. It means that the person's feelings have accepted what his reason tells them, so that he has come to see life from a radically different viewpoint and take a new attitude toward it.

The object of this book is to help you do this, but no book alone can cure you of a serious mental illness, because what you "get out of" any book is limited by your emotional reaction to its contents; if it stirs your inner conflicts up too sharply, it will

only frighten you or make you angry Neither can you *cure yourself* by even the most earnest efforts, for this is like trying to see your face without looking in a mirror. "Insight" into any grave misunderstanding must come through some outside agency, preferably a trained expert who will "mirror" you to yourself The most I can hope to do for you if you have a really sick mind is to help you recognize it as such, and to know what sort of treatment you should have and where to get it.

Two Types of Mental Illness

Mental illness is of two main types, known as neurosis (or psycho-neurosis) and psychosis, which are radically different from each other. In neurosis, only feelings or emotions are affected A neurotic is a person who reacts emotionally to people or situations on the basis, not of what they are, but of the *meaning* they have for him because of what he unconsciously associates with them His feelings are different from, or more intense than, those a healthy-minded person would have under the same circumstances A neurotically jealous wife, for instance, may be thrown into a panic—or a rage—if her husband shows the slightest interest in another woman, because this means to her that he may desert her for her supposed rival any moment. And the more distressing memories she has of former situations in which someone she loved threw her over for another person, the more of this sort of meaning she will attach to what may in fact have very little meaning at all Common sense may tell her she is letting herself "get all stirred up over nothing," but the more neurotic she is, the more surely she will go on feeling just the same way.

In the case of the psychotic, the emotional distortion becomes so strong as to overwhelm the person's reason as well as his feelings He not only *feels* himself in danger when intelligence might tell him that he is not, he *sees* non-existent dangers which confirm the feeling, and may invent (and believe in) equally imaginary safeguards He develops, as we say, hallucinations or delusions which are as real to him as what is going on about him and may ultimately grow to be much more so.

Miss W. at the age of thirty could not go more than a block away from home without literally collapsing from fear, although

she had no idea what she was afraid of. For years she remained a virtual prisoner and had to be supported by her family, although physically she was in the best of health. She was deeply ashamed of the reaction, which she recognized as "silly" and fought it with all her will power, but could do nothing to change it.

Mr. R. refuses to leave his room in the hospital for the same reason—fear that "something terrible would happen to him" if he did so. But he does not think his attitude is silly; on the contrary, he feels he would be worse than silly if he exposed himself to the machinations of a ring of gangsters who have sworn to kill him because he has information that would send them all to the electric chair if he dared to divulge it. He has "heard their voices on the radio," describing the tortures they will inflict upon him if they ever get him into their hands, and fears they may even get into the hospital by masquerading as doctors or attendants—in fact, there's one doctor of whom he's inclined to be suspicious right now.

Mr. R. is psychotic, or, as most people would call it, "insane," while Miss W. is neurotic, but as sane as anyone and likely to remain so. For I want to emphasize the fact that neurosis is *not* in most cases a precursor of psychosis. It is a quite different method of reacting to the "false impressions" which are at the root of mental illness. And a person who unconsciously has chosen to react in one way very, very rarely changes to the other. In fact, you might say he "doesn't have to"—he has found a way that serves his purpose.

The Fear of Insanity

- Yet unfortunately many people are afraid to admit they are neurotic or to go to someone who can cure them of their difficulties because they think it means they are "a bit crazy" or are likely to become so. For that matter, fear of "going crazy" or "becoming insane" is itself one of the commoner neurotic symptoms. Actually, since the last thing most psychotics will admit (or even let you suggest to them) is that there is anything wrong about their thinking, the fear that you may be going crazy is almost conclusive evidence that you are not. Like other neurotic fears, this one is based on the unconscious meaning you

attach to what you are afraid of, so that the first thing one asks a person who expresses this fear is: "What do you think you would do if you did go insane?" One young woman answered rather typically. "I am afraid I would kill my mother," and eventually came to realize that what she really was afraid of was the hostile feelings toward her mother, which she barely recognized were present in the depths of her unconscious mind, and which were so foreign to her conscious attitude that she could account for them only by calling them "crazy."

Incidentally, psychiatrists are loath to use the word "insane" because its original meaning, "mentally unwell," has been obscured by its use as a legal term to indicate a person who does not know what he is doing, or is not considered morally responsible for his actions. For example, under the common law a person charged with a crime cannot be acquitted on the ground of insanity (or in England pronounced "guilty but insane") if he "knows the nature of his act and that it is wrong." Yet this rule ignores the fact that an emotionally unbalanced person may be driven by forces stronger than his conscious will to do things he is clearly aware of, and for which he feels a terrifying sense of guilt, yet which he literally cannot keep from doing. Such a person may not even be psychotic, but to call him morally responsible is absurd, and to punish him is worse than useless since the need to incur punishment may well be the real motive behind his behaviour. In practice, both courts and juries exercise discretion and call many people insane who are not so by strict legal definition, but laws on the subject desperately need amending.

This is no less true of the legal status of thousands of people who are unmistakably psychotic and potentially dangerous, yet are left free to go where they please and do anything they feel an impulse to do because they can pass the legal tests for "sanity" and so cannot be committed to custodial care.

One of the most striking cases of this type I have seen was the late Mr Q, who came to see me at the age of seventy-eight with the amazing story that, soon after the Haymarket Riots in Chicago, forty years before, the spirit of one of the men who was hanged had taken possession of him, and had ever since subjected him to endless and fantastic tortures. He was smart enough to realize that "most people think I'm crazy if I tell them this, so

I generally keep my mouth shut," and until his death he made his living as an editor of books and quite a competent one. Yet if anyone was ever insane in the strict sense of having a sick mind, he was, and the fact that his psychosis never drove him to an act of violence is "more good luck than good management," so far as society is concerned.

Varieties of Neurosis

I cannot attempt to give you a complete account of all the variations of neurosis and psychosis. The best book I know about neurosis alone (*The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, by Dr Otto Fenichel) runs more than 700 pages, and the study of psychosis is at least as complex, if not more so. The most I have space to say must be so oversimplified and relatively superficial that it will appear "unscientific" to the experts. But I think that with those reservations this is a comparatively valid picture.

Except when it is caused by physical injury, infection, or degeneration, mental illness is the result of some sort of conflict between the two psychic forces from which all emotion comes: the "Id," which is the mass of natural instincts, and the "Super-Ego," which appears in consciousness as conscience though it actually involves much more.¹ The effect of such a conflict is to "stall" emotional development at the point where, and in regard to the issue over which the two forces are fighting, and thereby compel the victim to adjust to life in a comparatively childish and neurotic fashion. For example, if the conflict starts over the natural impulse to destroy whatever or whoever interferes with our enjoying certain pleasures we instinctively crave—like the pleasure which the baby gets from moving his bowels any time he happens to feel like it—and if the fight is intense enough, the result may be either that we repress our self-will altogether and let ourselves become "doormats," or that we become continuous rebels against all authority and develop into criminals or revolutionaries. Or we may swing from one childish extreme to the other for no adequate objective reason.

Everyone reacts to inner conflict—which in itself is unconscious—with one or both of two conscious feelings: *anxiety*, based on the threat of the Super-Ego that we shall be punished if we

¹ See Chapter IV.

disobey its orders, and *defence*, which represents a way of warding off the danger. Depending on which feeling is the stronger, the neurosis that develops will be of the "anxiety" or of the "compulsive" type. In practice, however, most neuroses show characteristics of both types and are classified by diagnosticians as "mixed."

The outstanding characteristic of the sufferer from anxiety neurosis is that he is consciously *afraid*—generally of things, people, or situations which he knows it is illogical to be afraid of. To this class belong the people who have phobias, the most obvious and striking of neurotic symptoms. Their fear may attach itself to almost anything, and early psychiatrists invented a long list of names based on its various objects: *claustrophobia* (fear of being shut in); *agoraphobia* (fear of being out in the open); *erythrophobia* (fear of blushing), *ochlophobia* (fear of crowds); *elurophobia* (fear of cats), and so on until the Greek dictionary gives out. But the difference between these phobias is incidental. In each case the thing of which the person is really afraid is not the conscious object of his fears, but what that *means* or *symbolizes*, through association, to the infantile, unconscious part of his mind. The choice of a symbol may be relatively accidental, though it usually is based on some similarity of function or appearance. For example, snakes and mice (which nearly every woman seems to be afraid of) are almost invariably symbols of the penis, which nice little girls are taught to regard with fear and horror. And if you are sceptical about the mice, remember that the average woman, asked exactly what she thinks a mouse can do to harm her, will say, shudderingly, "It might run up under my clothes!"

A little less obvious was Miss D's overwhelming panic when she had to pass an optical shop with a huge eye painted on the window. It will not be so hard to guess—though Miss D. had never realized it—that the sign had come to be a symbol of her mental picture of the "all-seeing eye of God." Which in turn was an elaboration of her memory of the eyes of a stern mother who in childhood appeared to "know everything bad that she did," and punish her for the slightest act of disobedience.

The reason, of course, why a neurotic directs his fear toward a symbol is that its true object is too terrifying to let himself think of, though it usually is so only from a childish standpoint. Once the entire situation is brought into adult consciousness and its

childish elements are recognized for what they are, the victim gains "insight" into its essential unreality and his fear usually dissolves into thin air. The quickest and most satisfying "cures" through psychotherapy are apt to be in this field. Where the fears are relatively vague and "diffuse," they become proportionately more elusive, but on the whole an anxiety neurosis is the easiest to deal with of all mental ailments from the standpoint of both patient and physician.

Neurotic Compulsions

Miss J. would spend upward of an hour each morning packing and repacking the contents of her handbag, because if these were not arranged in an exact, specified order—with the comb underneath the comb, for instance—"something terrible would happen." For similar reasons, Miss J. could not sleep at night until her shoes were placed in the closet in the order of their height, and in a perfectly straight line; she would get up two or three times to make sure she had made no mistake about it. She was a "compulsion neurotic," and her rituals represented what she herself called a foolish way of warding off some danger, of the nature of which she had not the vaguest idea. In the same class with her, though less seriously ill, are the people you can "set your watch by," who must always do the same thing at the same time each day, the executive who cannot leave the office until he has "cleaned up his desk," and the housewife who cannot go to bed until she has put the living room in order, no matter how late her guests stayed.

Each case has its special explanation, but there is one factor all compulsions have in common. The patient has made "order and system" a symbol of "self-control," and feels that the slightest variation of the pattern would mean that he had unwittingly "slipped up" and given vent to some forbidden impulse around which his inner conflict centres. Perhaps the most frequent basis for neuroses of this type is a childish struggle between the desire to touch parts of one's body which are taboo (a desire so easy to give way to if one "forgets") and the need to make sure one has not forgotten; but, again, the conflict is entirely unconscious and the conscious actions only symbolize it.

A distinctive feature of most patterns of compulsion is that they are based on what is really magic. For one must not forget

that the whole unconscious mind, both Id and Super-Ego, is completely primitive or childish and frequently substitutes magic spells and incantations for the realistic methods by which the adult seeks to accomplish his aims. A savage (who is a child, emotionally) tries to harm his enemy by sticking pins in a wax image of him; and with equal lack of logic, an emotionally childish-minded woman may unconsciously believe that by washing her hands forty times a day she can keep her character from being defiled by "unclean" wishes or behaviour. Once more it is by coming to see the unconscious meaning of her actions that a woman like this may get rid of her compulsions. But don't forget that this process, which I have condensed into a sentence or two, may take months or years of patient effort. Or that to say most neuroses are either of the anxiety or of the compulsive type no more provides a picture of their infinite variety than saying that most diseases are either infective or degenerative is a comprehensive outline of pathology.

Warped Personalities

Because growth, however interfered with, never can be altogether stopped while life lasts, conflicts which apparently arrest it may result, not in neuroses, but in character distortions or "perversions." If you really want to understand the Nazis, for example, you must think of their emotions as those of small boys who, never having outgrown the natural cruelty with which a child reacts to early disappointments and frustrations, used the intellectual powers of mature years to refine it to a point which seems "inhuman." Most traits of character we find objectionable in our neighbours—and perhaps are mortified by in ourselves—have a similar basis. Uncontrollable temper and a habit of sarcasm are equally the reactions of a person who is not mature enough emotionally to believe he can get what he wants by less offensive methods, while the "eccentricities" which we regard with mixed amusement and amazement in some of our neighbours may be explained in the same way. Not only the miser's greed, but the behaviour of the person who cannot bring himself to part with anything, however worthless, often represents a carry-over of the child's fight not to part with his excretions just because he's told to.

Sexual perversion, long regarded as marking a mysterious "degeneracy," is again no more than the kind of distortion we see in a tree whose normal growth toward the sky had been blocked. It is still as prevalent as ever, and will be as long as parents—and society—terrify children so that they do not dare allow their natural impulses to grow up so as to achieve mature satisfactions. The moral deformities with which Krafft-Ebing shocked our fathers and grandfathers are still to be found if you are looking for them, or give them a chance to seek you. I myself have met most types of them: the fetishist whose one source of sexual pleasure was to hire a prostitute to take her shoes off and put her feet in his lap; the college professor with an overwhelming urge to stand before the window naked; the "necrophiliac" who dreamed of intercourse with a corpse, but so far had settled for a woman who was dead drunk and unconscious; the husband whose maximum erotic thrill was gained by watching another man have intercourse with his wife, and so on indefinitely. Unconsciously, each of these unhappy people is at heart so childish as to feel that the original infantile delights at which his growth has been arrested are less seriously punishable than the normal intercourse which means to him daring to usurp the rights and privileges of his parents. And while most such people are ashamed of their behaviour and may struggle desperately to change it, the drive of unconscious urges is too strong to be checked.

Character distortions and perversions are harder to "cure" than are neuroses, because, while all of them represent the best adjustment that the individual has been able to achieve in view of his unconscious fears and conflicts, a neurosis involves more pain, and so more incentive to find a way to correct it. On the other hand, the average eccentric regards his peculiarities as virtues, while perversion, like inversion (homosexuality), may provide sufficient satisfaction so that the person prefers to go on as he is, resents the thought of changing, and may even express pity for the poor unfortunates who live what he professes to see as the humdrum life of normal people. For this reason, unless his behaviour makes a public menace of him or he himself suffers too much from the sense of being different from other people, we might as well let him alone.

"Imaginary" Illness

Besides its effects on our feelings and behaviour, a neurotic conflict may have definite and serious effects upon our bodies. At first this was realized only in the case of what are called "conversion symptoms" or "conversion hysteria" (no connection with "hysterics"), in which various functions of the body are distorted or blocked for no organic reason. Thus a person who has nothing wrong with his legs may suddenly be unable to walk—as occasionally happened in cases of "battle fatigue," where the soldier consciously desired to do his duty, but was made incapable of doing it by the unconscious intervention of the instinct of self-preservation. Nothing could be more mistaken than to call this sort of disability "imagination." From the victim's standpoint it is as real as a broken leg, and as impossible to cure by telling him there is nothing the matter with him. But what is the matter may be an unconscious wish to be ill which he cannot change because he does not recognize it. There's a classic story of a man who went blind because, as he ultimately realized, and told his analyst, "I just couldn't stand the sight of my wife any longer," and we all know people who are hard of hearing who invariably "hear the things they aren't supposed to" because in such cases the desire to hear momentarily overpowers the unconscious wish to "shut the world out."

There is practically no known illness of which a convincing imitation (to anyone but a doctor) may not be produced as a "conversion symptom" without any conscious desire of the patient to malingering. I knew a young woman, for example, who had all the usual evidences of tuberculosis—coughing, loss of weight, night sweats, recurring fever, and the rest. She was convinced, in spite of the most expert physical examination, that she was "consumptive," and was cured of this belief only by psychiatric treatment. And, of course, victims of neurasthenia ("nervous breakdown") may lose weight and appetite, have fainting spells and "heart attacks," and suffer from agonizing headaches without any physical cause that can be discovered.

The Mind makes the Body Sick

But within the last few decades it has come to be known that emotional disturbances can produce more than symptoms; they

can be the cause of actual organic disease, which may even be fatal

Everyone who reads the papers knows how war requirements have hastened progress in curing infections with new drugs, such as penicillin. But the war has also speeded the development of something even more important—a whole new approach to disease, and especially the large group of “chronic” diseases that do not come mainly from infection and that have been hard to cure because so little was known of what caused them. To-day it is being proved more and more definitely that if you have been sick for a long time and do not get better under ordinary treatment, it is likely that the source of much, if not most, of your trouble is in your mind. And in that case, unless your mind is cured, you’re likely to be an invalid or semi-invalid indefinitely. The name given to the treatment of disease from this viewpoint is “psychosomatic medicine,” which combines the Greek roots meaning “mind” and “body.”

Of course, in a sense this isn’t a new approach at all. The old-fashioned family doctor realized that when he was treating Mrs. Jones’s asthma he was treating *Mrs. Jones*, not just a disease. He had known her long enough and well enough to have a pretty good idea of what sort of person she was, and under what circumstances she’d get sick or stay well. But where old Doc Smith had to rely on common sense and intuition to see the connection between Mrs. Jones and her ailments, the psychosomatic doctor has scientific facts to go on and can often succeed where poor Dr. Smith would have been helpless.

Emotion and Glands

One source of the facts with which psychosomatic medicine is working has been laboratory study of the effect of our states of mind, particularly our emotions, on our body chemistry and on the way our various organs function. It’s well known that fear makes our hearts beat faster, and the scientists discovered that one reason for this was a powerful stimulant called adrenalin, secreted by small glands attached to the top of the kidneys. Just why an emotion should start these glands working, no one yet knows, but that is what happens, and more and more similar effects of the mind on the body are being discovered. On the

other side, psychiatrists found that as people's disturbed minds were put at rest, they often recovered from physical illness. You might say psychosomatic medicine consists in learning how to put these two sets of facts together.

You will recall that in an earlier chapter I described how the unconscious desire to be loved may produce gastric ulcers which are "real" or "physical" enough to kill the patient if he is not treated for them. And to have the maximum effect, the treatment must approach the disease from both mental and physical standpoints. It isn't a question of whether such an illness should be classed as physical or mental. As one doctor puts it: "The question 'Physical or psychic' is in most cases wrongly put, and should be replaced by the question, 'To what extent physical and to what extent psychic?'" In fact, this is the big difference between the new approach and the types of "mental healing" in which people were asked to forget about their bodies and cure all their ailments by right thinking. To the doctors of the new school, mind and body are one—different aspects of a single organism. Neither the part of you that we call your mind nor the part we call your body can be damaged without hurting the other, and it takes them both, working together, to make you what you are as a person.

Another condition in which this is shown especially clearly is high blood pressure, or hypertension—the cause of death of about a quarter of all people more than fifty years old. A doctor would probably use longer and more scientifically exact words, but the phrase "nervous tension" is a good clue. For, of course, this doesn't start with your nerves but with emotions, such as anxiety or anger. Let's say something makes you furiously angry at a person against whom you have no comeback—your boss, for example, or, if you're a child, your parents. Since anger invariably arouses an instinctive urge to fight back, your body and nervous system proceed to get up steam to prepare you for the battle. And then—nothing happens. The energy generated remains bottled up inside you, and your blood pressure is likely to remain high instead of subsiding, as it would have done if you had got your rage out of your system. It's a bit like forcing water into a hose without opening the nozzle.

The accepted list of ailments which are or may be psychosomatic is long and is growing longer. It includes, as I said, many

if not most of the diseases we call chronic—and notice that as infections are got under control, chronic ailments will become the most general cause of illness. Among those already recognized as partly psychogenic (originating in the mind) are many types of heart disorders, arthritis or “rheumatism,” diabetes, migraine headaches, colitis, and at least some of the allergies. And, of course, as we have seen in previous chapters, a large share of supposed “accidents” are really caused by an unconscious wish either to punish oneself or to find a way out of an unbearable situation.

The Problem of Infection

But while so far it is chronic illness that is recognized as being largely owing to mental factors, the part which the mind plays in our falling victims to infection cannot wisely be neglected. As Geddes Smith writes in *Plague Upon Us* “When pestilence falls on the people, there is a story to tell. The story of the people who *do not fall sick* has never been told.” A particular organism like the *Bacillus typhosus* may be what the doctors call “the only known specific cause of typhoid fever,” but not everyone who gets this or any other germ into his system comes down with the disease it is supposed to cause. As far back as when Thomas Mann wrote *The Magic Mountain*, it was beginning to be suspected that tuberculosis could be at least partly an emotional reaction, and that view is even more widespread to-day. For most people are exposed to this disease at one time or another, and only comparatively few contract it. The rest are protected by mysterious forces like “resistance” or “immunity” that seem to be as much psychological as chemical or glandular. The relative freedom from contagion of doctors and nurses seems to evidence this.

And finally, while it may be pure presumption for a layman to suggest that the doctors can be wrong, the long failure of the quest for the cause or the cure of cancer at least makes one wonder whether the research may not have been aimed in the wrong direction. If I live to hear it announced that cancer has been found to be psychosomatic, or at any rate to have important mental factors, I shall hear the news with satisfaction, but with little surprise.

The Body affects the Mind .

A chapter on mental illness would not be complete without some further reference to those ailments of the mind which have always seemed strangest and most terrifying to the average human being, and which we are often so reluctant even to think about that we leave their victims worse neglected, if not more cruelly treated, than criminals. The treatment and fairly frequent cure of the psychoses will be described later. All I intend to do here is try to picture their outstanding character and indications so that you may realize the need to seek help if you see these manifested within your circle.

To begin with, as your mind may make your body sick, so there are bodily conditions which affect the mind so seriously as to leave it unable to function adequately. These are mainly cases in which the brain has been injured by wounds or infection, or has begun to degenerate as a result of old age. For while the mind is not "in" the brain in any localized sense, the brain is the tool which the mind works with, and without which it is useless. Actual brain injury through wounds or infection may produce mental disturbance which, because brain tissue does not have the power to "regenerate," is likely to be lasting. But such injuries are relatively often not so serious as the accompanying emotional shock may make them appear.

Certain poisons may affect the brain either temporarily or permanently. People who have inhaled too large quantities of illuminating gas sometimes suffer lasting effects, as do victims of the abuse of narcotics. There are also "alcoholic psychoses" like delirium tremens, though these nowadays are thought to be more often the result of vitamin deficiency than of direct alcohol poisoning.

One fairly widespread germ infection may do the brain irreparable damage. Syphilitics who have put off treatment too long may develop the strange lack of muscular control called *tabes dorsalis* or *locomotor ataxia* and/or the mental deterioration of general paresis, which is nowadays sometimes arrested by medical treatment, but can never be cured. The one ray of consolation is that the paretic as a rule is not unhappy. He more frequently develops an insane "euphoria" or cheerfulness, sometimes accompanied by delusions of grandeur.

A certain proportion of people as they grow older develop psychoses either through hardening of the brain arteries (cerebral arteriosclerosis) or simply degeneration of brain tissue (senile dementia). These distressing types of illness are perhaps less likely to occur with people whose previous mental health had been good, but once they do come nothing can be done but make the patient comfortable and wait for his hour of deliverance.

Functional Psychoses

The above conditions are known as "organic psychoses," as distinguished from functional psychoses, which are far more prevalent, and for which no adequate physical cause has as yet been found. Like neuroses, functional psychoses seem to be results of emotional conflict, but now so severe that the person's reason as well as his feelings becomes involved. Again, like neuroses, the psychoses fall into two main groups, which in theory are quite distinct, although in practice they are often difficult to distinguish from each other. But one quality which all psychoses have in common is that, far from being utterly "unnatural" and foreign to the workings of the normal mind, they are simply cases in which trends which may be found in all minds have got out of control and been carried to pathological extremes. For example, if you are like most of us you have "moods." One morning you wake up feeling the world is your oyster and there is practically nothing you need fear to tackle, while another day—often for no known reason—you feel blue and hopeless with the world a weight which you must carry on your shoulders.

Raised to the n th power, moodiness becomes a "manic-depressive psychosis," the less frequent of the two main types, but also the easier to cure and the more likely to recover without treatment. In the "manic phase" of this disease a patient may believe he is Napoleon or Jesus, and in any case feels free and able to do anything his impulses may dictate. If anyone tries to stop him, he is likely to "turn ugly," and may even kill the interferer.

The "depressed phase," as the name implies, is "the blues" carried to the uttermost extreme, and often reinforced by false notions of some crime the patient has committed—in fact, the

belief that he is guilty of the "unpardonable sin" is almost a standard delusion in such cases. Depressed patients may spend all their waking hours in weeping, may refuse to eat, and be apparently indifferent to what goes on around them.

It is not hard to see that in general these phases are extreme manifestations of the fluctuating tides of battle in the conflict which creates the moods of relatively normal people. In the manic phase, the Id has for the moment won the upper hand, so that the patient feels completely free to follow his instinctual urges, while in the depressed phase the punishing Super-Ego has won no less full control for the time being, and the mind can tolerate no feelings but those of guilt and self-condemnation.

An equally "mad" extension of traits which are found in all of us is the other main type of psychosis, schizophrenia. Contrary to popular impression, the word does not mean primarily a "split personality." Coming from the root from which our "scissors" are named, it means a state of mind "cut off" from reality to such an extent that in extreme forms the patient is totally oblivious of the outside world and pays no attention to what is said or done around him. I have seen a patient in this "catatonic" state let herself be put through the ordeal of forcible feeding in the presence of a class of forty students without manifesting the slightest awareness of either the operation or the audience. A catatonic patient will sit or lie all day without moving, will refuse to answer when addressed, and frequently will not feed himself though nearly dying of starvation. Such patients even ignore their natural functions and have to be diapered like babies.

In another form of schizophrenia, the patient may fly into sudden rages and be ready to kill on the slightest provocation. Or he may show mad excitement and scream meaningless words at the top of his lungs, hour after hour. Even so, however, what distinguishes him from the manic depressive is that his excitement (or indifference) has no visible connection with the outside world or with anything that goes on in it. He is wholly absorbed in what goes on in the "private world" of his own imagination which by now is alone real to him. Or if he acknowledges the existence of a world outside of himself, it is as a source of danger.

Psychiatrists have not fully agreed as to whether paranoia

(which was described in a previous chapter) is always a form of schizophrenia or is sometimes a distinct psychosis. But that does not greatly matter for our present purpose. The main thing to bear in mind, especially about ourselves, is that *the habit of suspicion* is the mental attitude most dangerous of all to sanity and happy living. And of all forms of psychosis it is hardest to cure because the victim is practically powerless to trust anyone sufficiently to let himself be treated.

Again this is no more than an outline with innumerable details left out, but to go much further would require a psychiatric textbook which a layman is incapable of writing and few laymen would read. At least I hope I have given you a general idea of what mental illness is and how to recognize it. Our next—and last—chapter will be given to describing the amazing progress that has been made in the cure of sick minds and suggesting what, if your mind is sick, you should do about it.

CHAPTER XX

HOW SICK MINDS ARE CURED

UNTIL ABOUT THE BEGINNING of the present century, the fate of a person whose mind became seriously ill was tragic indeed. If he became actually "insane," he could, as a rule, expect to be put away in an "asylum" where he might meet rather less abuse than in the time when Bedlam first became a byword, but where, if his illness did not show "spontaneous remission" (get well of itself), he would spend the rest of his life. A start had been made in classifying types of mental illness and observing which were likely to improve and which to grow worse, but actual treatment was hit-or-miss where any was given. I knew one old doctor whose "treatment" of schizophrenia was to keep the patient on a near-starvation diet, and another—the head of a mental hospital—who claimed he had achieved cures by taking out the patients' tonsils.

Then came the discovery on which all modern psychiatry is based—psychoanalysis, by means of which Dr. Sigmund Freud not only learned of the unconscious mind's existence, but was able to release its contents and so leave his patients largely able to control the inner forces and resolve the inner conflicts of which they had before been the blind victims. Many more of us to-day have at least some idea of what psychoanalysis is and can accomplish than ten years ago, since of late not only books and magazines, but the stage, radio, and screen have been filled with (frequently inaccurate) depictions of it. But essentially the subject is still pretty much a mystery, and what many people think they know about it is distorted or mistaken. For instance, I still meet innocents who tell me that they "have been psycho-analysed" when what they mean is that they have consulted a psychiatrist, or even that they have subjected themselves to an intelligence test.

What Psychoanalysis is

Some of these misunderstandings are no doubt owing to the word "analysis" in "psychoanalysis." For if analysing a new brand of soap consists of putting it through tests which reveal what is in it, analysing someone's mind or "psyche" would in turn seem to mean no more than determining what sort of person he is and telling him that he is an "extrovert" or has an "inferiority complex." Freud coined the name psychoanalysis for his new technique because it developed through the effort to find out what it was in people's minds that made them mentally ill; but, surprisingly enough, he discovered that, in so far as the search succeeded, *the patient got well*. Unlike a soap, which remains the same, however thoroughly you analyse its ingredients, a man or a woman who is psychoanalysed becomes in many ways a different person. Though, of course, his nature is not really changed and cannot be so; what has happened is that at last he is freed of obstacles that have kept him from growing into what his true self would have been if its development had not been interfered with.

You may never wish to be psychoanalysed—or seriously need it—but the process is still something you should know about because it constitutes a "last resort" you can fall back on if you ever have to. You will also want to know about it in order to understand the world you live in, since psychoanalysis has done more to revolutionize the thinking habits of civilized mankind than anything else since the theory of evolution was first formulated. And while, as we shall see later, briefer and less costly ways of reaching somewhat the same goal have been developed, even those who use these "short-cuts" admit that complete analysis goes deeper and has more reliable results than any or all of them.

Since psychoanalysis is an emotional experience, it can no more be described adequately to a person who has not been through it than what colours look like can be described to a blind man. This book has been full of instances of facts about themselves which people have been led to realize through the psychoanalytic technique. Yet, however startling these may sometimes have seemed, the technique itself is relatively simple. What would happen to you if you undertook analysis would at

first be merely that you would be asked to lie on a couch and "talk out" your feelings and ideas to someone whom you could not see and who very often would not even answer. The couch is used because nearly anyone can talk more freely if he is physically relaxed, and the analyst sits out of sight (conventionally, at the patient's head) to make him less self-conscious and concerned about the impression he is making. He is then asked to "let go" as much as possible and *say everything that comes into his mind*, whether or not it appears important, is in good taste, or even seems to make sense. This is what is known as "free association" and if you think it is easy, wait until you try it. You will be astonished to discover how firmly fixed the habit of submitting almost all we say to rigid censorship before we say it is, particularly if we are well-educated and attempt to be well-mannered.

How We give Ourselves Away

There is one common exception to this—our unconscious "slips" or lapses. A business-man had to preside at a directors' meeting, but wanted to cut it short so he could keep a golf date. Standing up to call the group to order, he rapped on the table and announced instead, "The meeting is *adjourned*." A girl I know met a young man at a party whom she'd heard enough about to know it would be foolish to let herself get interested in him. She tried hard to keep her resolution, but revealed the way she really felt when she said to a friend later, "Isn't he attractive! Too bad he's so"—"irresponsible," she meant to say, but the word came out of her unconscious—"irresistible."

In analysis we watch such slips carefully, for often they give us a chance to show someone out of his own mouth how he's deceiving himself. A patient who'd quarrelled with his wife admitted generously, "Of course there are plenty of faults on her side," and was deeply chagrined when I pointed out that he'd said "*her* side," not "*my* side," as he had obviously intended. Consciously, he wanted to be fair, but his unconscious wish to put all the blame on his wife was too strong for him.

But while slips of this sort are a piece of good luck which the analyst cannot depend on, anyone who "rambles" long enough is bound to say things which surprise him, at least when his attention is called to their unconscious implications. And, what

is even more important, anyone who lets himself go will eventually express emotions he would not think he was capable of feeling. Contrary to what most people think, the analyst asks few questions—in fact, just enough to get the patient started talking, though vague statements on his part are likely to be met with, “What do you mean?” or “What makes you think so?” And this for the reason that the patient couldn’t tell the analyst what he mainly wants to know, because he doesn’t know it himself—it’s buried in his unconscious. Besides, the chief purpose of analysis is not to learn facts, but to release emotion. The nearest to this in everyday life is a woman having a good cry. In the course of an analysis the patient is likely to laugh, cry, rage, swear—even call the analyst names—and it’s all part of the process.

For not only is there no way of relieving nervous tension quite like getting your pent-up emotions off your chest, but it is only when you let a feeling out to someone else that you can, as it were, stand off and get a good look at it yourself to see where it comes from and how much real basis there is for it—for example, how much someone against whom you have a grudge has actually done to hurt you.

Because it is feelings analysis deals with, it even makes relatively little difference whether the patient is strictly truthful; one way or another his loves and hates, his fears and ambitions will come out into the open, and that is all that matters. But once he begins to realize that nothing he says will be criticized or met with disapproval, he no longer will want to be bothered with lying.

Dream Interpretation

Besides “slips” and “free association,” the analyst has a third and highly useful tool to work with—the patient’s dreams. Of all aspects of the analytic technique, this one naturally seems most unconvincing to a person who associates the idea that dreams have a “meaning” with the “dream books” still sometimes consulted by the superstitious. Again it was Freud who discovered the principles of dream interpretation and found out why we dream.

A dream is a mechanism by which you allow yourself to go on sleeping under circumstances which, without it, might force you to wake up. You may dream, for instance, that your alarm

clock is a passing fire engine because that implies that it is something that need not concern you. People who are hungry often dream of eating, and lonely men dream themselves back at home. But *emotions* that might be disturbing also are appeased in dreaming, and most frequently of all the purpose of a dream is to provide imaginary satisfaction for a gnawing mental hunger which you repress altogether in your waking hours, and even in dreams will not allow yourself to recognize in its true form. Wishes such as this are gratified "symbolically" by dream pictures which at first seem to mean nothing, and through dreams of this type the analyst can often convince you of emotions which you have in all sincerity denied until your own mind dramatized them.

Mrs. T. dreamed she was travelling along a crowded highway, moving without effort, faster than the fastest traffic. The reason (as she thought in the dream) was that she didn't slow herself up by letting her feet touch the pavement—just let go and floated. The fact was, this dreamer was trying to make herself believe I was foolish in suggesting that she should take a more realistic attitude toward life, and especially toward her husband. The dream reassured her that she didn't need to get her feet on the ground, but could continue to "live up in the air," as she always had done. When the dream was discussed, she admitted that that was the way she still felt, though she had to confess it seemed ridiculous when she stopped to think about it.

Mrs. M. dreamed one night that she was leafing carefully through the pages of an immense book because she thought there was a violin hidden in it. Here the explanation was that she had been studying psychology—reading books about it, in fact—so as to find how to get back the love of her *violinist* husband. And where the dream gave her away was by forcing her to admit she really cared about him. Before that, to save her pride, she'd managed to persuade herself that she'd lost all interest in him, as she believed (wrongly) he had in her.

This dream, by the way, is so completely personal that Freud himself couldn't have interpreted it without some knowledge of Mrs. M.'s background. And while it's true that there are objects that mean pretty much the same to everybody—the bull as the symbol of male sexuality, for instance—the personal element in any dream is too important for a conscientious analyst to dare

to interpret dreams except for people he is analysing. For here he can use not only what he knows about them but the various associations that the dreams arouse in their minds when they relate them.

On the other hand, you cannot learn to analyse your own dreams—except for the relatively obvious ones—any more than you can learn to psychoanalyse yourself in other respects. I spent fifteen years trying to do this before I was forced to realize that it was futile. The emotional distortions you are looking for are in the same mind (your own) that is doing the looking, so that you are like a man with a severe astigmatism trying to make himself a pair of glasses. His visual defects make him distort the lenses as he grinds them.

Analyst and Patient -

The relationship that should develop between analyst and patient—indeed, must develop if the treatment is to succeed—is quite unlike any other that exists between two human beings. While it lasts, it is a very intimate one, even though *all the feeling is on one side*. On his part, the patient must feel free to love or hate, fear or despise the analyst, and to say so in the strongest of terms, while the analyst must have his own emotions—vanity included—so completely under control that even if the patient calls him a fool or a faker, he can treat the accusation as a symptom of the patient's analytic mood and seek only to find out what made him make it. One patient of mine, for instance, used continually to sneer at my ignorance of atomic physics—in which he was something of an expert—because for the time his chief line of defence was to convince himself that at least there were some things about which he “knew more than I did.” But because he must be so impersonal, the analyst will not attempt to treat a patient with whom he has any intimate connections—in fact, many analysts refuse to treat a person to whom they have even had a social introduction.

The way that the patient feels about the analyst has two distinct sides, one real and the other unreal. On the real side, there is no use going to an analyst in whose ability and honesty you do not have full confidence, except in such passing moods as I have just referred to. On the unreal side, the effect of this confidence and of your putting yourself under another's guidance

will be that you will "transfer" to him the childish attitudes and feelings you had toward both or either of your parents, including especially your urgent wish for their approval and fear of their disapproval. Because you will get neither from the analyst, you will gradually stop expecting them and begin looking at your problems from *your* standpoint, not from that you have been trained to feel you "should" take toward them. Since the analyst has no desire to make you into what he thinks you should be, substituting him emotionally for the parents who had such strong ideas on the subject—even to the work you should do or the sort of person you should marry—gradually frees you to *become yourself* as nothing else in all the world can.

It is often asked whether an analysis should not be followed by some sort of "synthesis"—whether after your mind has been "pulled apart" it does not need somehow to be put together again. But the truth is, an analysis can only rid your mind of fears or false impressions that have hindered its growth to maturity, or of a philosophy which involved an effort to find a way of living in spite of these obstacles. Freed of inner hindrances, your mind will *synthesize itself* and achieve a degree of harmony and integration you had never before experienced or imagined. Having recognized the limitations of your knowledge, you may be "sure" of considerably fewer things than before, but you will be sure in a new, profounder way of what is left, and of the new insights that you have acquired. You will feel a certainty which others may even find irritating because you will neither wish to waste time arguing with people whom you know you cannot convince, nor be disturbed by their failure to see things which you know they are incapable of seeing.

Pros and Cons

Analysis is a highly complex process and can be extremely dangerous in incompetent hands—there are cases in which bunglers or charlatans have driven patients to insanity or suicide. But most of the stories that you hear of people who have "never been the same" after they had been analysed are like Dick W.'s.

Dick's parents had set their hearts on his being a lawyer. After they had bulldozed him through three years of law school,

he had a nervous breakdown—not from overstudy, as they supposed, but from repressed anger. Analysis helped him gain the courage to tell them he wouldn't stand their running his life any longer, and to start afresh as the mechanic he had always wanted to be. They never forgave the analyst and said he'd wrecked the boy's career, but the boy to-day is well and happy for the first time since his early childhood.

Again, while no analyst would advise a divorce, a good many men and women have decided on the basis of what they've learned through analysis to stop trying to live in a situation that they've become convinced is hopeless.

I am sometimes asked if I think "everybody should be analysed," which is a bit like asking if I think everyone "should" have a million dollars. In the first place, there are only a few hundred thoroughly trained analysts in the United States—not enough to treat 1 per cent of the population. Again, the process is much too painful for most people to endure unless they are so utterly unhappy they cannot get on without it. Being stripped of your last rags of self-deception is no fun, I can assure you; and a fair share even of the people who start an analysis find that they just "can't take it." You may recall several well-known people who have made a start, got one glimpse at the truth about themselves, and run back screaming to the "consolations of religion."

And, finally, an analysis takes too much time and money for the average person to afford it. *How* much will depend on circumstances. As far as the time goes, a complete analysis will usually take from two to four years, assuming the patient sees his doctor three to five times a week. Then, since each case thus requires from 500 to 1,000 hours of the analyst's time, it cannot be done cheaply. A successful and popular analyst makes a good deal of money, but his income is small compared with that of a top-notch surgeon, or even an orthodontist. You might say in general that an analysis costs about as much as a college education—and is worth much more to anyone who really needs it.

I am speaking, of course, of an analysis by a psychiatrist who is a physician. Most of the best analysts in the United States are M.Ds.—in fact, no one without this degree can be admitted to full membership in the American Psychoanalytic Association.

But Freud did not believe a knowledge of medicine was essential to being a psychoanalyst, and two of the sex men whom he chose as his most intimate associates and fellow workers were not doctors. Especially since the Nazis came to power and publicly burned Freud's books, a number of Europeans who were thoroughly trained as "lay analysts" have come to this country, and their services are sometimes less expensive than a physician's. But don't go to such a person unless you are sure of his qualifications—above all, that he has been analysed himself by someone in good standing.

Brief Psychotherapy

Even so, things being as they are, the average person in limited or moderate circumstances cannot have a full psychoanalysis, no matter how much he may want it. This fact, plus the urgent needs of the war's mental casualties, has greatly encouraged the development of shorter, less expensive methods generally classified as "brief psychotherapy." These methods are based on psychoanalytic principles but try—often with a great deal of success—to achieve the same purpose with less time and effort. They are of especial value in psychomatic cases, where the urgent issue is to cure a physical disease which mental disturbance has created, but are also useful in the milder forms of purely mental illness.

Since what cures the patient is the "insight" *he* gains into the source and meaning of his difficulties, what the doctor knows about him is in itself of no value. An experienced psychiatrist may often recognize in a few interviews what it would take him months or years to "get over" to the patient. But in briefer types of treatment the doctor *can* choose which aspect of the patient's inner conflicts are causing the most trouble, and by emphasizing these and excluding the rest can get him back to relatively good health without dealing with the deeper issues at all. Dr. Flanders Dunbar, for example, comments on the cure by psychosomatic treatment of a woman who had been an invalid for eighteen years: "This was done without ever referring to her incest wishes or an Oedipus complex—words which so far as I know she has never heard in her life." In another instance that I knew of, a long-standing case of "factitious

dermatitis" (inflammation of the skin caused by habitual scratching), all it took to bring about a cure was to get the patient to realize that the scratching was a subtle form of masturbation.

Still another difference between brief psychotherapy and psychoanalysis is that in the former the psychiatrist *does* give advice, and even encouragement. He may explain to the patient what is causing his unhappiness (instead of allowing him to find it out for himself), and may also reassure him that he can get well if he tries hard enough. This is called "supportive" treatment, and while less reliable and lasting than more basic methods, it may often be all that is needed to restore the person to a relatively happy and successful life.

Breaking Down Resistance

Often when the source of the patient's problems is too deeply repressed to be reached by talking to him his "resistance" can be broken down by hypnotism, or narcotics, or a combination of both. The improvements in technique in these fields are perhaps World War II's biggest contribution to psychiatry, though the same discoveries would no doubt have been made eventually, even in peacetime.

Ever since the time of Franz Anton Mesmer (1733-1815), and in the East for thousands of years before that, certain people have been able to induce in others, and sometimes in themselves, a curious state of sleep or near-sleep known as the "hypnotic trance." This is a state of "dissociation" rather like that of the sleep-walker except that it leaves the subject highly responsive to the hypnotist's commands or "suggestions." Within certain limits he will believe anything he's told and do whatever he is ordered to do. Tell him he's an Indian, for instance, and he'll go into his idea of a war dance; or say that the chair he's sitting on is afire, and he'll leap into the air with screams of anguish. But he also may be made insensitive to real pain, so that needles can be thrust into his flesh, or minor operations can be performed on him without his being aware of them.

This is not accomplished by the hypnotist using some subtle "force" or "power." He has no power except what the subject gives him. The hypnotic trance is a subjective state brought on

by the deliberate surrender of control over one's conscious thinking to another person—or, in the case of self-hypnosis, to one's own unconscious mind. For this reason you need never fear that anyone will hypnotize you against your will, or that if you are hypnotized, you can be made to behave in a way foreign to your fundamental character. Only a potential criminal can be hypnotized into committing a crime. But too many of us have criminal tendencies—at least, unconsciously—to make it safe to let ourselves be hypnotized by an untrustworthy person. Or, again, as a leading psychiatrist said to me: "Since nearly every woman has some trace of an unconscious wish to be raped, a hypnotist with no scruples could take dangerous advantage of a woman subject."

Sad to say, becoming a hypnotist does not require any special gifts of character, or even education. Anyone with the capacity to inspire confidence of others can, with practice, learn to hypnotize them. I know of a teen-age boy who used to hypnotize his mother to relieve her headaches—a reversal of their normal roles that had serious emotional consequences. As one doctor put it: "Anyone with nerve and a sharp scalpel can open an abdomen, but in surgery it is what he does next that counts, and the same is true of hypnotism." An ignorant or unscrupulous hypnotist can exploit the dependence of his subjects dangerously, and great harm can be done by the unskilled use of this technique in mental or character disorders.

Two Uses of Hypnotism

The original and most dramatic use of hypnosis is to *put things into* the mind of the patient by "suggestion," but the results achieved in this way are unreliable and temporary, even though at times they may be useful. A blind man who has been made to see by being hypnotized (which may quite well happen if the blindness is due to "hysterical conversion") will not only take a new lease on life, but gladly submit to further treatment if the doctor who performed the "miracle" tells him he needs it. But the fact that in such cases the symptom will usually come back once the effect of the suggestion wears off makes this use of hypnotism much less valuable than the other and more recent technique in which hypnosis *draws out* of the

patient facts and feelings of which he has been entirely unconscious in his waking hours

As you may remember, it was through hypnosis that Freud first discovered the existence of the unconscious mind, including the fact that we remember everything that ever happened to us, however completely it seems to have been forgotten. Either by hypnosis or by the injection of a narcotic drug such as sodium pentothal (the treatment known as narco-synthesis) or by both methods together, psychiatrists now break down the resistance which has kept their patients from facing the reasons for their illness, and thus have found the best "short-cut" to insight yet discovered. It may even happen that both methods are employed with the same patient—for instance, someone who is too excited to be hypnotized may be given a sleep-inducing drug and hypnotized before he is fully awake. But remember that whichever method is used, it is only with the aim of helping the patient to find out what's troubling him, and decide, with the assistance of the doctor, what to do about it. That's why what *comes after* the hypnosis—the new insight the patient gets from talking out his problems, man to man, with someone who can help him understand them—is what really cures him, if or when he is cured. Yet without some way of cracking the shell of his repressions he might never have known what his problem is.

A typical case described by Army psychiatrists, though a composite one, is that of Corporal Smith, who wound up in an Army psychiatric hospital with a condition that would once have been called melancholia. He attributed his depression to the shock of having seen his buddy, Sergeant Robinson, killed before his eyes while he himself was only slightly wounded, and he kept saying, "Bill was a better man than I am. What right have I to go on living now that he is dead?"

The truth, as hypnosis made Smith realize, because he came right out and said it while in a hypnotic trance, was that at heart he always had been jealous of Bill, and was actually glad rather than sorry to have him out of the way. But this in turn, as was disclosed through further questioning, grew out of the fact that the sergeant reminded him of an older brother who, as he felt, stood between him and his parents. Having realized first, that he could not help feeling as he did, and second, that his feelings did not make him responsible for his friend's death,

Smith was free to forget the tragedy and live in the future, not the past.

Back to Our Beginnings

You will have observed that even in this case, which seemed to grow out of a war tragedy, the roots of the trouble went back to the patient's childhood. The most startling discovery about hypnosis is that it can make you not only remember but "relive" your very earliest experiences. By the method called "regression" (literally, going backward) a skilful hypnotist can tell a patient it is his sixth birthday and the patient will actually become for the time being the child he was at that age. He will not only recall everything that happened to him but have the same feelings, ideas, and capacities that he had at that time. In the largest army psychiatric hospital (Mason General Hospital, Brentwood, L I) Dr (then Major) Herbert X Spiegel regressed a twenty-three-year-old man to various age levels of his childhood, but had a third person, a psychologist, give the patient the tests given to children to determine their emotional and mental development. And at each age the man "tested" within a comparatively few months of the normal standard for the age in question. For example, when he was told he was six, he showed a mental age of seven years, ten months; when told he was eight, he rated nine years, four months; at twelve, thirteen years and four months; and so on throughout the testing. The results thus even reflected the fact that the patient always had been—as he still was in his waking hours—of more than average intelligence, despite his illness.

In fact, hypnotism can recall events and feelings very much further back in infancy than most people realize that any memories at all are retained. The average person's conscious memory is blocked at about five or six years, but much earlier phases of our lives are still parts of us. Major Spiegel's patient was able to react as an infant would, sucking his thumb and reaching for bright objects when regressed to six months. Dr. Robert M. Lindner, a state prison psychologist, reports in his book, *Rebel Without a Cause*, that in an extended hypno-analysis he was able to get his patient to remember clearly scenes he witnessed at the age of eight months. Indeed, much of his emotional disturbance traced back to the terror with which at

that age he witnessed intercourse between his parents, while another shock which had done serious damage was seeing a "close-up" of a savage beast (presumably the original Rin-Tin-Tin) when his mother took him to the movies as a baby in arms. I cannot vouch personally for these statements, but I have not heard a responsible psychiatrist dispute them.

Narco-synthesis is less spectacular and cannot go so far back, but since it is simpler and requires less special gifts on the physician's part, it is more often used and can be most effective. I have seen a catatonic patient, for example, who in normal circumstances neither spoke nor moved, and had to be forcibly fed, "come back" under an injection of sodium amytal and tell in voluble detail the story of the seduction and betrayal which had been the immediate cause of her illness. Narco-synthesis is also used with good results on merely neurotic patients.

Shock Treatment

Still another technique which most people know about only from hearsay that may have astonishing results is the "shock treatment," first given with insulin, then with a drug called metrazol, and now generally with electricity. In electric shock the patient is subjected for a fraction of a second to a powerful electric current. The immediate effect is a convulsion in which he has to be held down firmly to keep him from injuring himself. But he doesn't know this unless someone tells him later—in fact he remembers nothing that is done to him, and may even ask the doctor when he is going to have his treatment. I have seen many shock treatments given and talked with the patients afterward, and have confirmed this. The results are so spectacular that it is hardly strange that there appears to be a tendency to overuse this method. I have talked with men and women who were "violently insane" a few days before (one man who had tried to kill his wife and children, for example) who had become apparently quite normal after half a dozen shocks.

I must say, however, that what I have seen of the effects of "shock" upon neurotics has made a much less favourable impression, and so far I am inclined to agree with a considerable number of psychiatrists who feel that this treatment should be limited to cases which are not "accessible" by other methods

For indeed; even with shock the greatest usefulness is in the fact that it brings back the patient to the point where his attention can be reached and he can be helped to gain insight, and unless he has some psychotherapeutic treatment while in this state, the improvement is often comparatively short-lived.

Why shock treatment should work at all is still widely disputed and no theory has won full acceptance. The most plausible suggestion I know from an analytic standpoint is that, since guilt is by far the largest factor in causing all mental illness, the shock—which is practically a symbolic death and sometimes approaches closely to a real one—may have the force of an act of expiation which wipes out the guilt sufficiently for the time being to allow the victim to dare take another look at the real world from which he had fled in terror into one of his own making.

A similar, though less complete flight from the real world is, as I have tried to show, the cause not only of those serious neuroses which make people incapable of ordinary living, but of those milder neurotic patterns which have made people like you and me unhappy and frustrated. For the problem of all mentally ill people is the same as ours—to learn to keep their exaggerated idea of what they “should be” from making them their own worst enemies, and, by accepting themselves as they are, gain the courage to look at life as it is, and so grow up and be happy.

POSTSCRIPT

HOW BAD IS OLD AGE?

ONE MORNING A COUPLE of years ago I woke up to what was in its way the most painful shock of my life. I was sixty years old! For a man who had always thought of himself as one of the younger generation and frankly regarded older folks as dull and stodgy, if not actually enemies of progress, you may believe that it wasn't easy to take

Then, having begun to realize that nothing serious had actually happened to me, and that I was mainly just scared, I did what, as a psychologist, I'd been advising other frightened people to do. I dragged my pet bogey out into the open and tried to see what it looked like in the daylight of all the facts that I could discover.

In the process, I made the acquaintance of two of the very newest sciences—or scientific labels. *gerontology*, the study of old age, and *geriatrics*, the methods of treatment of old-age diseases (both words built on the Greek *geron*, an old man, or elder). In the growing mass of literature on these subjects I found two books which I'm glad to recommend to anyone who would like to read more than I have space to write here. *Aging Successfully*, by George Lawton, Ph.D., which deals mainly with the mental problems of the older person, and *The Second Forty Years*, by Dr. Edward J. Stueglitz, which speaks from the standpoint of the medical profession.

But why should you bother reading any further on what, especially if you're still young, may seem an unpleasant subject? Because

If You aren't Old, You probably Will Be

And that's not so obvious a statement as it may sound. For one of the most remarkable and least publicized facts about life in the United States to-day is that more men and women will live to be old than ever before in the history of mankind.

In all ages, of course, a few people have survived into the seventies or longer, but until now they have been a very small proportion of the total population. The average span of human life in ancient Rome, for instance, was but twenty-three years, and even to-day it's scarcely longer in many Far Eastern countries. But the average baby born in the United States in 1948 will live to be sixty-five unless an atom bomb confounds the stasticians, and his or her children will live even longer. And if things go on as they've been going since 1900, in another forty years it's estimated that almost 15 per cent of our population will consist of men and women sixty-five or older.

This does not mean there is any great chance that the time will ever come when human beings will live for 150 or 200 years—the men who should know best do not take that idea very seriously. But they do think that more and more people will get to what seems to be the normal limit of human existence—100 years or so—and, what's even better, will do it in reasonable health and comfort. And they point out, very reasonably, that unless we find a way of letting all these older people do more than just sit around and wait until "their time comes," we'll be loading an appalling weight upon the shoulders of the men and women who already are asked to support their children through the longest period of dependence any youngsters ever have known.

But you probably are less concerned about being a social problem in your old age than you are in what will happen to you, and what sort of life you can or will have. "Pollyannas" of the Dr. Walter Pitkin type have not convinced me that the average person will find the years after sixty "the best years of his life." But I have convinced myself that these years aren't so black as they've been painted, and that most of the fears with which I had been approaching them were either unfounded or exaggerated. If you're "getting on a bit," let's look at some things which you may have been afraid of and see just how bad they really are—or need be. For example:

You're Afraid of "Losing Your Grip"

The simple way to avoid this is just *not to let go*. I mean by this that you ought not to "retire" unless you absolutely have

to, and that if you're working for employers who go by the calendar instead of what their workers can do, you should start right now to plan work for yourself to do when you are "let out."

Among other things, your health requires it. Lloyd's of London is said to have found that the average member who retired to "take it easy" after sixty lived just three years, though his normal expectation of life should have been four times that. If it's possible to taper off activities which are getting to be too much of a burden, that's quite all right. It's a good thing for an older man to quit work a bit early, or to take a day off in the middle of the week. But disuse is the one certain cause of atrophy of mind or body, so that physical or mental idleness is a short cut to the shelf, if not the cemetery. Don't overdo, of course, but remember that as Dr Stieglitz puts it. "There is less hazard in doing a little too much than in doing not quite enough "

And don't get the idea that no work you can do after sixty or more will be worth while because of the way your mind and skill "slow down " For while there will be a gradual slowing, it will be so little (unless you give up and quit) that the increasing power of judgment which has been called "the one intellectual capacity which definitely improves with age" will more than counteract it. It is simply not true that nobody can turn out creative work that matches his best youthful efforts after sixty or so. The late Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote some of his most influential Supreme Court decisions after eighty, Goethe finished the last act of *Faust* at ninety, and, despite an agonizing illness, Sigmund Freud made memorable contributions to the sum of human knowledge in the eighth and ninth decades of his life.

What's more, people in the old-age group have made remarkable success in fields that were new to them. There is the amazing case of "Grandma" (Mrs Anna Mary) Moses, who began to paint at seventy-eight because arthritis had crippled her fingers too badly to let her hold a needle, and who since then has had more than forty exhibitions of her pictures, and is universally accepted as a serious artist, if not an unquestionable genius. Or there is William de Morgan, who wrote his first novel at the age of sixty-six and finished six others, some of

which were international best-sellers, before he died ten years later. Old dogs *can* learn new tricks, if they want to.

You're Afraid of Suffering and Illness

That's another fear that's much exaggerated. At least, until toward the very end, there is no reason why a person over sixty should be in any worse average health than when he was younger.

For one thing, as we grow older, most of us develop an immunity to many infections, such as typhoid fever and tuberculosis, and to-day the chief infection to which older people remain subject, pneumonia, is so nearly "licked" that doctors scarcely take it seriously.

Again, as Dr. Stieglitz assures us, "The symptoms of disease [pain included] become less conspicuous as we grow older" And while we are more apt to develop the so-called degenerative or progressive diseases, such as "hardening of the arteries," "the later in life [these] begin, the slower is their progression, and the more benign their course" A person of seventy can live for years in reasonable comfort with a disease that would kill an adolescent in a few weeks or months. And, moreover: "Even very aged people withstand surgery surprisingly well, and should be given the benefit of the doubt when surgical intervention is indicated "

But illness and old age do not always go together, and it's even probable that you won't have to face the need of giving up the ways of living to which you have grown accustomed Another authority on geriatrics, Dr Harold Stevens, writes "Habits of smoking, eating, and even moderate drinking should not be altered" in treating the older patient In fact, whatever moral objections we may have to so-called minor vices, there is no evidence that they shorten life except in certain specific types of illness. As another doctor puts it: "If an individual survives into the ninth and tenth decade in spite of apparently very bad habits, these habits cannot be as detrimental as we formerly thought."

You're Afraid of Boredom

That's one trouble no one need have who's in touch with other people and with what is going on in the world. There are

two ways to make sure you will be bored as you grow older, but you do not have to follow either of them.

One way is to have a single-track mind. The man who has never learned to take an interest in anything but business, and the woman who's completely wrapped up in her home and family will both run the risk of being literally bored to death when one has to retire and the other realizes that her children do not need her any longer. If you are like either of them, you cannot snap out of it too quickly—for your own good later.

But a no less certain road to boredom is the habit of getting most of your recreation out of "second-hand" amusements such as listening to the radio, or going to the movies (or the ball game)—in short, letting other people entertain you. For in that case the time will come when all that you see and hear will be "the same old stuff," and you'll wonder why there are no more good actors or ball-players. Reading is a good deal better, especially if you read to learn as well as for amusement, but nothing quite takes the place of things you can do yourself, and the more of these there are, the less risk of boredom you run.

Get over the feeling that you have to limit your activities to what you can do well—or the fields where you can beat the other fellow. Every older person (and a lot of young ones) should take as a motto G. K. Chesterton's inverted proverb. "What's worth doing at all is worth doing badly." For example, painting pictures is fun if you like it, whether anybody else admires them or not.

I recently visited the Hodson Community Centre, New York City's first and largest meeting place for older men and women, and was fascinated by the quality as well as the amount of work turned out by members of the art class, practically none of whom had ever held a brush or crayon in their hands till they were seventy or older. Music, wood-carving, rug-weaving, and other like hobbies are popular also, as are classes and discussion meetings. And although the average age of members of the "club" is seventy-four, the doctors report a notable decline in attendance at the nearby clinics many of them used to visit regularly.

Centres where old people have a chance to do things as well as have things done for them are being set up in many cities—notably Los Angeles, where public schools are being thrown

open in the evening for this purpose. If there's no such centre near you, a good way to escape being bored might be to pitch in and help to get one started. But, in any case, there's nothing to prevent your finding things to do which are within your physical or mental limitations, and how "well" you do them in comparison with other people doesn't matter at all. Being bored is an admission, not that you're unlucky, but that you've allowed your courage and imagination to go to sleep. Wake them!

You're Afraid of Being Lonely

Once more, you don't have to be unless you want to. The mistake that's easiest to make here is to limit your friends to members of your own generation so that, as they go on ahead, you're left feeling like a stranger in a strange land. But there is no reason why you shouldn't start now to make friends with younger people, and they'll welcome you as heartily as your contemporaries if you go about it realistically and intelligently. Just remember, friendship is like everything else that is worth while: it has to be paid for, and no one will give it to you just because you need or want it.

Of course I'm not talking about money, even if you have it, the friends it will buy are not worth what they cost you. But you can get friends by being interesting, and if you have "kept up," here's one place where your age is a real advantage. It has been said that the weakness of young people to-day is that they have "never read the minutes of the previous meeting," but if that's true, it isn't entirely their fault. They are justifiably tired of being told that everything they do is wrong and everything you did when you were their age was right. But if you can give them sympathy and understanding, they'll be genuinely grateful to have the light of your ripe experience thrown on their problems.

Then, again, while most people like someone who is interesting, nearly everyone likes anybody who is interested—in him. For that, you don't need a wide experience or a college education—just a heart that's warm and open. There are people who make a good living out of listening to others' troubles without even giving advice, and there's no more universal craving than for "somebody to talk to." Let it be known that you are a

sympathetic listener and the young people as well as the old ones will beat a path to your door.

But don't be a bargainer for friendship, or let even your own children get the idea that they *owe* you their time or attention for "all you've done for them." For the minute anything becomes a duty or a "moral obligation," every instinct of the normal human being prompts him to try to avoid it, or to do it "under protest."

You're Afraid of Losing Your Attraction for the Opposite Sex

If so, it's a good sign, even though the fear is groundless. There's no more false or pernicious notion than that older people "ought to be ashamed" of having any interest in sex or of keeping up a normal sex life—if they're married—after they no longer can have children. For while the importance of this side of life can be exaggerated (usually from fear or repression) in a man or woman who is not completely senile, interest in sex is the "spark plug" that keeps the emotional and intellectual engine running. Goethe fell in love when he was over eighty and I've always liked the legend of how Justice Holmes, at ninety, passing a sweet young thing on the street, exclaimed, "Oh, to be seventy again!" In fact, while it may not be true that "a woman is as old as she looks," I should heartily endorse the saying that "a man is old when he stops looking." For the longer you keep feeling yourself a *man* or *woman*, not a neuter who's "too old for such things," the less boredom and frustration age will bring you.

You're Afraid of Mental Illness or Depression

There may come a time if you live very long indeed when inadequate blood supply for your brain may make your mind function foggy and leave you unable to remember much except your childhood; but by that time you'll have found an inward peace which will make your relations with the outside world seem unimportant. Meanwhile, the neuroses to which older people are particularly subject are no different from those of other ages and can be avoided by observing the same laws of mental hygiene. A chronic depression (known as "melancholia" in its extreme form) grows out of a morbid sense of guilt

over the mistakes you've made or the real or imaginary sins you've committed. And the time to head that off is right now—with the help of a psychiatrist, if necessary. But much, if not most, unhappiness in older people is based on self-pity—a form of self-love which we may develop to console ourselves for not getting the love we feel we deserve from others.

You're Afraid You'll be a "Burden"

This can happen, although usually the expense and care you can't help needing will be far less of a "load" on others than the things you *can* help, such as criticizing or complaining, or, making unreasonable demands on the feelings of those who are caring for you. The actual care is something that you have earned, if not from your children, from the country you have worked for and helped support with your taxes, and you should feel no more shame at claiming it than in collecting endowment insurance. Only don't insist that it must be your children who look after you, if doing so will cripple their lives. Let the community pay its debt to you, not out of "charity," but in common justice.

For most of us, anyhow, this problem is still a long way off, and the last bridge there is any sense in crossing prematurely is one you may never come to. If you are my age, or even older, there will still be a good many years to enjoy, and you may find them more fun than you imagine. I'm certainly not in favour of denying the existence of unpleasant things, but it's just as easy—and a great deal wiser—to think of the pleasant ones unless you have to face some real and urgent problem. For if there is one idea this book was meant to impress upon you it is that no one who has grown up emotionally will waste time or energy in being miserable if he possibly can help it.

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